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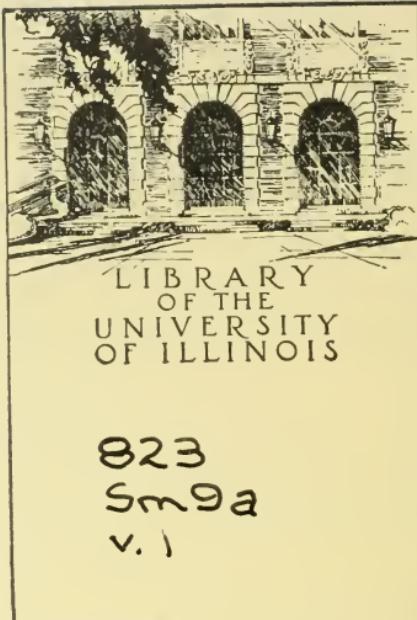
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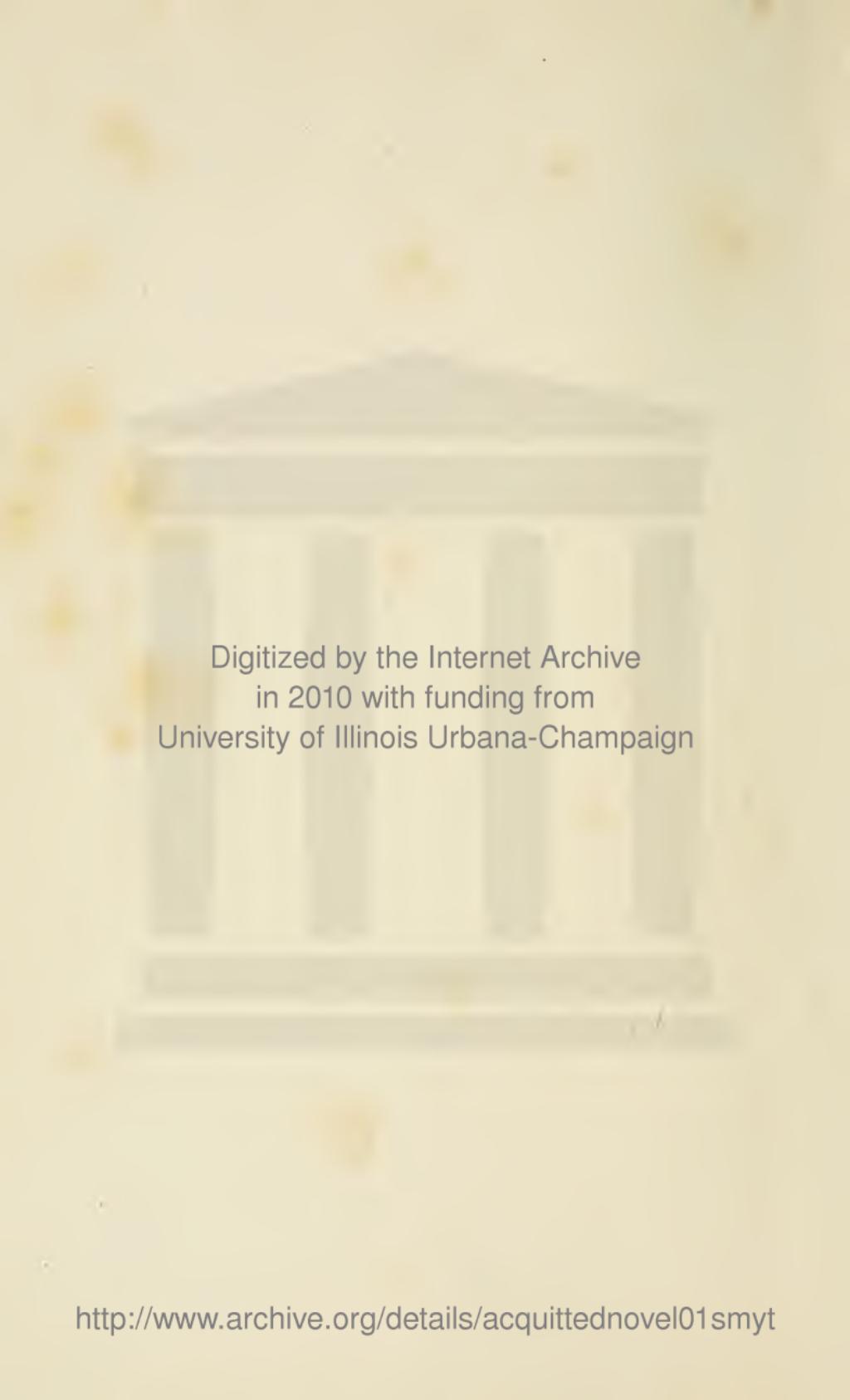
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London: CHAPMAN & HALL, 193, Piccadilly.

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A C Q U I T T E D.

A very faint, light blue watermark-style illustration of a classical building with four prominent columns and a triangular pediment occupies the background of the page.

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A C Q U I T T E D.

A Novel.

BY

MRS. GORDON SMYTHIES,

AUTHOR OF "COUSIN GEOFFREY," "THE JILT," "THE LIFE OF A BEAUTY,"
"TRUE TO THE LAST," &c.

" Faith is the star that gleams above,
Hope is the flower that buds below ;
Twin tokens of celestial love
That out from Nature's bosom grow,
And still alike in sky and sod,
That star and blossom ever point to God."

Poems by CHARLES KENT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.
1870.

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v. 1

Dedication.

MY DEAR DR. HASTINGS,

Allow me to dedicate to you, a work which was commenced in happier days, and when it seemed probable that your matchless skill and zealous care, would have succeeded in saving the (to me) unutterably precious life, of my young and only girl.

You will remember with what a lively interest, and what an innocent and young delight, that good, gifted, and beautiful being, anticipated my dedicating this work to you, in acknowledgment of her recovery.

To the last, it was her firm conviction (as it is mine) that had she been under your

care at an earlier stage of that sad malady—the scourge of our land, and which seems ever to select for its victims the loveliest and the best—you would have saved her, as you have done so many similarly afflicted.

It was by the earnest advice of some of those whose dearest ones had been snatched from the grave by your science and your skill, that I brought my darling to you. Many of your best-authenticated cures were spoken of as almost miraculous, even by members of the Faculty, who do not believe, as you do, in “the curability of consumption,” and until a very severe winter was followed by a most inclement and blighting spring, we were all high in hope, that my darling’s name would be added to a list of which you are so justly proud.

Alas, though you did so much to alleviate her sufferings, “the worm i’ the bud” had

been at his deadly work too long, for even you to save that precious one! But through your genius and your untiring care, the last year of that dear spotless life was one of freedom from pain and bodily discomfort, and one of mental peace and happiness; and when at last that pure and pious young spirit was summoned to its reward and to its rest, she passed away as calmly and as painlessly as a fair and spotless lily, the flower she so truly resembled.

A mother's "long despair" has hitherto prevented my completing a work, so mixed up with the lovely memory of one, the shadow of whose early tomb must for ever darken my path of life, save in those happier hours when I can realize the blessed fact, that what is such loss to me, must be such gain to her! But now that four long years have mellowed the wildest anguish

into a bearable sorrow, and that I am able to resume my work, I feel that I am doing what my grateful and beloved girl would wish done, in thus publicly recognising your anxious care and wonderful skill, and recording at once her gratitude and mine.

I am, my dear Dr. Hastings, with every sentiment of respect and affection,

Your faithful friend and servant,

H. M. GORDON SMYTHIES.

To JOHN HASTINGS, Esq., M.D.

London, 10th May, 1870.

A C Q U I T T E D .

CHAPTER I.

“ May the winds blow till they have wakened Death,
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas
Olympus high, and duck again as low
As hell’s from heaven.”—*Shakspeare.*

T was the middle of August.
The day had been sullen, close,
and lowering, like an angry man
biding his time, and watching his oppor-
tunity to give vent to his wrath.

At midnight the pent-up fury of the
elements burst forth.

The wind howled, moaned, and sobbed ;
the thunder roared and bellowed in furious
response.

The forked lightning flashed ; the rain

poured down in torrents; and by the electric light, as it illuminated for a moment the vast expanse of sea and sky, the black clouds might be seen gathering together from all parts of the heavens, like counsellors in their long robes meeting to consult what was to be done at this terrible crisis.

The fierce waves and the raging winds met in mid-air to contend for the mastery; but the waves spent their strength in froth and foam, and the winds lifted them in their strong invisible arms, and dashed them to pieces against those giant sentinels, the rocks that guard the coast of Cornwall.

Curiously wedged in a fissure of these rocks, which indeed formed its side-walls, was a fisherman's cottage.

It was situated in one of the wildest and most lonely parts of that wild coast, and was inhabited by a young fisherman named Nathaniel (commonly called Natt) Lynn, and Polly, his pretty, tidy little wife.

This young couple had not long since taken possession of this cottage, which had been left to Natt Lynn by his quaint old bachelor uncle (also a fisherman), who had built it in his youth, and had lived in it to extreme old age, and died there.

On this night of fierce storm the rain beat against the diamond-panes of the cottage windows.

The wind smote and rattled at the door like an impatient traveller craving shelter.

The thunder bellowed among the rocks and caves, and every now and then the interior of the cottage was illumined by the forked lightning's flash.

And lo! in strong and solemn contrast to the wild life and hurry and tumult in the sky and on the waters, was the still, rigid form of a little female infant—the first-born child of Natt and Polly Lynn—who had long been ailing, and who, amid the roar of the elements and the loud voices of the storm, had uttered its last little moan of

pain, and breathed its last almost inaudible sigh.

The young mother, loving it all the better for the care and trouble it had caused her almost from its birth, had borne bravely up, hoping against hope, until the very last.

She had not given way to her grief while there was yet anything to be done.

It was not till she had rendered the last sad offices to her heart's darling that she had quite realized the dreadful fact that all was indeed over.

With sublime courage—a courage at which Natt Lynn marvelled—she had prepared the little wasted form for its coffin; she had closed the eyes, straightened the limbs, laid it out on a small table, stripped the plants in the windows of their blossoms (the lovely plants to be found in every cottage window in Cornwall), to deck the little corpse, and covered it with a white linen cloth.

When all this was done, and it lay there stiff and cold, and her eye fell on its vacant cradle by her bedside, the anguish that had long been gathering in her heart burst forth in torrents of tears.

She fell on her knees by the bed, threw her arms wildly up, and crying, “Polly! Polly! Oh, my baby! oh, my darling! shall I never see thee, never hear thee more?” she buried her face in the bed-clothes, and sobbed convulsively.

Natt Lynn, scarcely less afflicted than his wife, knelt down by her side, and tried to comfort her.

“Don’t’ee give way, lass,” he said. “Don’t’ee, for my sake. Am I not more to thee than many daughters? Why, thou’rt cold, cold as”—he was going to say “DEATH”—but he thought that word would renew her grief, and set her off again, so he only said, “cold as ever cold. Come to the fire, dear wife; I’ll soon make it burn up—come.”

“Oh, Natt,” said the poor young mother, rising and hiding her hot, tear-blistered face on his breast. “Oh, Natt ! dost hear the thunder roar, and the winds rage ? Oh, to think her blessed little spirit should be abroad on such a night as this ?”

Polly, like all people of strong piety and half cultivated minds, mingled the real and the ideal in her speculations on a future state.

“It’s not abroad, lass,” said Natt. “It’s with Him who said, ‘Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.’ ”

“Them’s blessed words,” sobbed Polly. “Oh Natt, if I could but see her in heaven !”

“If thou couldst behold her now, wife,” said Natt, “thoud’st maybe not be able to look upon her face, it ’ud shine so bright ; and she’ve wings by this time, maybe.”

“Oh, Natt,” said Polly, weeping anew, “I’d raither see her as she were before she took bad. I’d sooner see her in her little cap

and pink print frock as I made her, than clothed in wings, and soaring away out of sight."

"Wife," said Natt, solemnly, "it was thy father and thee first taught me to look beyond this life; and now I must warn thee not to be a backslider. Be patient, dear wife; she were a blessed baby, and she's in heaven now."

Seeing that Polly looked upon him as an oracle, Natt began to think himself one.

Comforted by his words, Polly let Natt lead her to the old oaken settle near the fire. It was burning very low, for both Natt and his wife had been too much absorbed by grief to attend to it.

Natt fetched wood and coal, and with the aid of the bellows made a cheering fire on the old-fashioned brick fireplace.

There was no grate.

Polly had sunk down on the settle, and thrown her checked apron over her head and face.

She did not wish Natt to see the tears she could not restrain.

"Thou'st eaten nothin' all day, lass," said Natt. "Thou maun be downright lere. I'll put the kettle on, and make thee some prime coffee."

While the water was getting hot Natt sat down on the settle by his wife, and throwing his strong arms round his Polly, his head sank on her bosom, and he cried like a child.

When this irrepressible burst of anguish had wept itself away, Natt rose, and having, though he was a tall, strong, muscular young fellow, a heart and hand as gentle as his Polly's, he made the coffee and toasted a bit of bread; and to please him she forced herself to eat and drink a little.

Natt wanted his Polly to go to bed, but she could not bear to do so.

So they sat side by side, and he held her hand and talked softly and kindly to her;

and thus the night passed away, and the storm abated. The grey dawn came in at the cottage windows, and seemed to settle on the little form under the white cloth.

In that grey light of morn Polly looked so hollow-eyed, so haggard, and so ill, her pulse was so quick, and her hand so burning, that Natt would not listen to any more excuses or entreaties, but firmly said she must go to bed at once ; and she obeyed.

He smoothed her pillow.

He drew the poor thin check curtain, so that the light should not distress her hot eyelids, red and swollen with weeping.

He sate down by her until the clock struck six, and the sun forced itself in through the chinks of the old door.

Then Natt pulled on his boots, took his hat, and prepared to go out.

At that very moment the bereaved mother was thinking with convulsive anguish of her child's burial.

She was, therefore, at no loss to guess

what was Natt's errand, and she shudered; but she would not ask any question.

She dared not trust herself to speak.

She felt she must give way if she did.

"Good-bye, and God bless and comfort thee, lass," said Natt, laying his large hand on her hot head. "I'm off to Pencombe; but I'll come home, lass, as soon as my legs ull carry me there and back again. Now don't thee get up, there's a good lass! Maybe thee'll get a little sleep."

Polly turned her face to the wall, and held out her hand to him.

He took her in his arms and embraced her and blessed her, and then he left her.

Before going out he stole round very quietly and kissed the dead babe's cold cheek, then lifted the latch, and, stepping out on the sparkling sand, found himself face to face with the bright morning sun shining in a sky of cloudless azure, and flooding with gold a sea which looked like a vast expanse of liquid sapphires.

CHAPTER II.

“Dawn is in the skies,
Love on the earth, while night endures, unguest,
Hope folds the wing and slumbers on its nest;
Let but a sunbeam to the world be given,
And hark—it singeth at the gates of heaven!”

Lord Lytton.

OTHING could exceed the beauty and freshness of the early morning after the storm.

The delicate seaweed floated, and the young, semi-transparent crabs sidled in the clear pools of sea-water left among the rocks by the inroad of the waves through the tempest.

The hard sands sparkled as if spangled with gold and silver, and many curious specimens of shells and seaweed caught Natt Lynn’s eye, and at any other time

would have arrested his attention, for he dearly loved the works of nature.

On this morning, however, he heard no music in the waves nor yet in the soft ripple as it broke on the beach.

He saw no beauty in the grand rocks, the translucent azure of the ocean, the paler blue of the sky.

He heard nothing but his little Polly's low moan, his poor wife's deep sigh and quick sob.

He saw nothing but the pale, pinched features of the child, the tear-blistered face of the mother.

He was going first to order the little coffin of the carpenter and undertaker of Pencombe, and then he meant to walk up to the Vicarage, a mile from the village, to ask Mr. Trelawny, the Vicar, when it would suit his reverence to bury the child.

As yet he had never seen the Vicar.

He had only been three weeks at his cot-

tage in the rocks, and during all that time the Vicar of Pencombe had been absent on business, and a Reverend friend of his had officiated daily while he was away.

Occasional duty there had been none during Mr. Trelawny's absence.

The Lynns' little girl had been christened before they came to live in the cottage on the rocks, and Natt as yet knew no one at Pencombe.

But if the beauties of that bright morning after the storm did not make him pause on his way, his attention was suddenly aroused when his eye, wandering listlessly from rock to sky, and sky to sea, lighted upon a boat capsized, and on other evidences of a recent wreck.

He saw at a glance that it was a boat which had belonged to some large vessel, wrecked, he doubted not, during the late storm.

It struck him immediately, that in this boat some passengers, and possibly some

of the crew, had hoped to escape—and had probably struck against the rocks.

Farther off he saw hencoops, casks, planks, and oars floating.

Natt Lynn was drawn a little from his own sorrow by pondering on the dreadful fate of those who had gone down in that dark, dreadful storm, and who now lay, perhaps, beneath those smiling, treacherous waters, awaiting that great day when the sea shall give up its dead!

He looked around to see if he could discover any fragment of the wreck on which the name of the vessel might be painted, and in doing so his eye lighted on something white fluttering among the dwarf rocks which at high tide, in very stormy weather, the waves sometimes reached.

“It must have been high tide about two hours ago,” he said to himself. “Had I been here I might have saved some lives; but how could I be here and Polly in such

sore trouble—and how could I guess what was going on?"

As he spoke he made his way to the spot where the white something fluttered in the warm breeze.

He started, for there, safely landed by the waves on a bed of sand and seaweed, and hedged in by dwarf rocks, lay, sleeping in the sun, a beautiful female infant apparently about the age of his own little lost one.

Around the child's waist was a life-belt of inflated indiarubber, to which it probably owed its safety. The sun had dried its white night-dress, which was of a very fine cambric and richly worked.

Natt took the baby in his arms.

He felt as if Providence had sent this lovely infant to supply to himself and his wife the place of their poor little Baby Poll.

Natt took off his jacket and wrapped the child carefully up in it—and then, clasped

ing it to his heart, he knelt for a few moments in prayer—prayer for guidance and help.

Then suddenly, and while a warm glow suffused his sun-burnt face, he started up and set off at full speed, a speed he never slackened until he reached his own cottage door, with the child of the wreck still asleep in his arms.

His wife was sitting up in bed, rocking herself to and fro, crying bitterly.

A nursing mother and her nursling gone; she was in great pain and in a high fever.

“Saved from the wreck, lass!” said Natt, putting the little foundling into the warm bed and the warmer bosom of the foster-mother Providence had provided.

“Have there been a wreck, Natt?” said Polly; “and how ever was it saved? Poor dear, no doubt it’s half famished,” and she put the infant to her breast.

The babe opened a pair of large, soft,

black eyes—smiled, cooed, nestled and at once began to support itself by its own exertions.

Polly's tears fell fast, but a softer expression was in her eyes as she said, "Natt, wherever did thee find this precious babe?"

"I found it among the dwarf rocks, lass, on a bed of sand and seaweed, fast asleep in the sun. How it got there heaven only knows, but in my own mind I fancies that some great steamer from foorin parts was wrecked in that ere terrible gale last night, and maybe some of the poor creeturs got into the boats to try to save them thar lives. Well, this babby was most like with its mother or its nuss in one of them boats, which one o' them had got close to the shore, when in course it filled with water, or sprung a leak, or struck on a rock—maybe into a sharp point, anyhow it capsized—this precious babe having a lifebelt round its waist, was maybe carried by the waves—they're the Almighty's handmaids, Polly,—and gently laid where I found it."

"Very like it was so," said Polly, "any way I'm truly thankful. It do seem to comfort my sore heart. God bless it, and thee, and Baby Polly."

To his great joy, Natt saw his wife strain the foundling to her heart, and softly kiss its brow, on which a few soft tears fell.

Soon after her hot and swollen eyelids closed, and while the little one was still

"draining the
Sweet founts,
That only thrive by wasting,"

she sank into a deep sleep.

With a thankful heart—for Natt had feared for her reason or her life—he quietly rose, stepped lightly across the floor, cast one yearning look of ineffable tenderness and regret at the little form under the white cloth, and, gently lifting the latch, set off again for Pencombe on the painful errand which his strange adventure had compelled him to postpone.

CHAPTER III.

“ Humbled from all his anger, and too late
Convinced whose fault had shaped the daughter’s fate,
The father heard ; and in his hands he veiled
His face abash’d—and voice to courage failed,
For how excuse, and how console ? . . .
My daughter.”

Lord Lytton.

ATT LYNN was not the only person up and out at sunrise among the rocks of Pencombe, on the morning after the storm.

Pencombe was not the real name of the little Cornish village in which our scene is laid, but we have reasons—very good ones too—for giving it this *alias*.

The Rev. Henry Trelawny, the Vicar, who had returned home the evening before, had risen at dawn.

He too had passed a restless night.

The gale, the thunder, the lightning, and the angry roar of the huge crested waves were very terrible to him, for he had an only daughter on her way from India in that noble steamer *The Golden Bengal*.

That daughter had been rash, undutiful, and disobedient.

She had been cunning in plotting her own tragic story.

She had deceived and distrusted a good though stern father.

She had trusted a bland but heartless lover.

She had been cruelly punished.

Her father in his heart forgave her, and loved her still ; and when he heard the angry voices of the storm, the winds, the waves, and the thunder outdaring each other, and when by the lightning's flash, he beheld the waves of distant sea coming on like crested warriors of a Titan race, he trembled, and prayed, and cried, “ Oh,

Father in Heaven, spare and protect my Minna and her child."

The Rev. Henry Trelawny was a man of an ancient Cornish family, but of reduced fortune.

The Earl of Altamount, the great man of the place, had been at Oxford with Trelawny.

They had been members of the same college (Christchurch), and being both Cornish men, had become intimate.

The Earl had, when the living of Pencombe became vacant, presented his friend Trelawny.

In after years he had sent his sons, the young Lord Derwent and the Hon. Jasper Ardennes, to be educated by his old friend, the Vicar.

Mr. Trelawny was a first-rate scholar, and was glad to increase by pupils the small income of his living.

He was a man of unusual height (measuring six feet three).

His frame and his muscular development were proportioned to his height.

He had a fine head and noble features—regular but rather stern.

He had been celebrated at Oxford as *facile princeps* in all manly exercises and athletic sports, and he kept up himself, and encouraged in his pupils, every kind of gymnastic competition. He promoted wrestling, leaping, running, swimming, &c., in all of which exercises he was himself pre-eminent.

Henry Trelawny was a thoroughly good, but not perhaps a very amiable, man.

He was very religious, but was rather a Son of Thunder than of Consolation, more prone to threaten than to entice—preaching the terrors rather than the rewards of the Lord.

He carried the sense of honour to the borders of Quixotism, and would have pined and died of a single stain.

He was very frank to himself, and he

seemed to be so to others. “Seemed” much more so than he really was, for he had a very good, warm heart, concealed, like the hot springs, beneath the granite and ice of Mount Hecla.

His wife lived and died without ever having understood, fathomed, or appreciated him, having always feared far more than she had loved him.

His daughter Minna naturally dreaded one, at the sound of whose firm step and bass voice she had often seen her poor invalid mother tremble and grow pale.

Both had feared him too much to have been open with him, and both deceived him from their cowardice.

He was, it is true, rather satirical, and too much given to fault-finding.

Never forget or ignore the fact that sensitive women always dread ridicule and shrink from a fault-finder.

And this easy little domestic transaction

(perfectly harmless in itself) was carried on by the Vicar's wife and daughter, with as much secrecy and trepidation as if it had been a plot or a crime.

One member of his household alone, old Dorcas, who had been his own nurse, and in time had become Minna's, and who ultimately settled down as cook and house-keeper at the Vicarage, did *not* fear him.

Sometimes Dorcas contradicted, and even disobeyed him.

She told him the truth always, even at the risk of offending him, and thus gained a sort of ascendancy over him, such as neither his wife or child had ever obtained.

Minna lost her mother when she was about sixteen.

Even at that early age she had inspired the Hon. Jasper Ardennes with a passionate love, which she, alas ! reciprocated.

The secret of this attachment she confided to her mother, but concealed from her father.

Her mother encouraged this secrecy during her life, but on her death-bed, seeing into the future perhaps with "Death's prophetic eye," she implored Minna to confide in her father and to tell him all.

This Minna had not courage to do, and when her first wild agony and despair at the death of that too indulgent mother had mellowed into a soft regret, she again received and answered Jasper Ardennes' notes and letters in secret. She wore his troth-ring on her finger, and his miniature on her bosom.

Jasper was singularly handsome; elegant in his dress and manners, quick, clever, and eloquent; but he was cruel, crafty, and resolute.

He pretended to be religious; but at heart he was a scoffer, a doubter, a free-thinker.

He affected a high sense of honour, but was utterly unprincipled, and yet as

full of fine sentiments as Joseph Surface or Claude Melnotte.

No wonder that Minna, beautiful as a poet's dream, vain, romantic, deceiving and distrusting a stern but good father, and confiding in a bland but false lover, wrought for herself a dark web of sorrow and deception in which she was entangled.

An accident revealed the long-concealed attachment of Minna and Jasper to Mr. Trelawny.

His wrath was very great, and his resentment unwise perhaps, as it led him to extreme severity towards his daughter.

He was all the more furious because he thought his noble friend and patron, the Earl, might suspect *him* of having connived at this clandestine attachment, with a view to his daughter's ultimate aggrandizement.

He shut Minna up in her own room, and but for Dorcas she would have had little but bread and water until he had

obtained from her a solemn promise to renounce Jasper for ever.

Failing to obtain this promise, he sent her—although she was nearly nineteen—to a strict school in the Regent's Park, London.

He threatened Jasper Ardennes to inform the Earl of the whole affair if he discovered any renewal of correspondence or intimacy between him and Miss Trelawny. He exacted a promise from Jasper to resign her entirely.

Jasper readily promised all he required—this on his honour. He even took a vow to that effect; but he swore on what did not exist, and promises cost him nothing, as he never meant to keep them.

Soon after this the Hon. Jasper Ardennes went into the army.

Miss Trelawny, by this time twenty-one, returned to Pencombe Vicarage. She was nearly nineteen and Jasper twenty when they parted.

They were both of age now.

His regiment was ordered to India, and though no one knew how, when, or where they had corresponded or met, Miss Trelawny eloped from her father's house a few days before her lover's regiment set sail.

Her father had every reason to believe that she had eloped with the Hon. Jasper Ardennes.

Indignant as he justly was, he was yet wise enough in his wrath not to proclaim his suspicions, not to publish his own disgrace and what he believed to be his Minna's shame.

He quietly and cautiously made every possible inquiry, and ascertained that she had been conveyed from a wild, remote, and rocky headland on the coast, by a fisherman in his boat, to Penzance, whence a steamer had sailed for London.

In his investigation many things came to his knowledge which led him to believe

that she had been for some time privately married to Jasper Ardennes.

Possibly when she was at school in London.

Among papers not quite consumed in her grate, Dorcas found a scorched, blackened scrap, evidently a signature, on which could be made out—

“*band.—J. A.*”

It was, of course, very probable—nay, almost certain—that the syllable “*band*” had been preceded by that of “*hus*.” Dorcas also found a few crushed orange-blossoms at the bottom of one of the boxes Miss Trelawny had brought with her from school.

Also among some forgotten papers in a table-drawer, were a bill for a white veil and orange-wreath and white kid gloves, and one from a dressmaker for making a white Indian muslin dress and a white silk bonnet.

Mr. Trelawny, much incensed against the principal of the ladies' school, but comforted too, called at "Circus House," the school in the Regent's Park where he had placed his daughter.

He saw the Misses Keen and Carp, but could elicit nothing from them, except that on one occasion a lady had called, purporting to be Miss Trelawny's aunt, authorized by her father to take her away for a fortnight's holiday.

As the date of this visit corresponded with that of the bills found in the forgotten table-drawer, Mr. Trelawny concluded that his daughter had been privately married to the Hon. Jasper Ardennes about a month before her return home.

Pencombe was so remote and solitary a place, and Minna had been so long absent from it, that the few people there knew nothing of her elopement.

The Vicar had given up taking pupils,

and his whole establishment consisted of old Dorcas and a deaf gardener.

Dorcas, who had taken Minna from the birth, loved her as her own.

Nothing was heard of the runaway daughter for nearly two years; but some weeks before the night of the storm Mr. Trelawny had received a letter from his daughter, dated Calcutta.

It was written in a trembling hand, and blotted with tears.

In this letter Minna implored her father's forgiveness, and entreated him to help her to hide herself and her child from one whom she believed bent on destroying them both. She said—"Father, if you knew all you would not despise and spurn me. I am *not* the lost, guilty wretch I must seem to you. I have inherited your sense of honour and your dread of shame, and my false position here has long been intolerable to me. Alas! I am bound by a solemn vow to secrecy until certain

events, which must come to pass in time, set me at liberty to speak. Even if you would receive me at home—dear, dear home!—I should not be safe there; but I am on the eve of privately setting sail for Galway in Ireland, in *The Golden Bengal*. I will write to you on my arrival there; and do, papa!—do come to your miserable, heart-broken, penitent Minna, and help her to hide from a cruel and remorseless persecutor."

Mr. Trelawny, who had often reproached himself with his harshness to his only child,—his motherless girl—resolved to grant her prayer, to go to her as soon as she announced her arrival at Galway, and to do all he could to comfort and protect her.

He suspected Jasper Ardennes of being cruel, crafty, fickle, and remorseless.

He guessed that he had become weary of his once idolized Minna.

With sensual natures love never long survives possession.

Mr. Trelawny felt certain Jasper's *was* a sensual nature.

He thought it likely he had already become enamoured of some other beauty, and he believed that Minna's life *was* in some danger.

No wonder, considering his only child was at sea, on that night of storm and tempest, Mr. Trelawny could not rest!

He was out as early as was Natt Lynn, and must have crossed his path but for the strange discovery and adventure which had induced Natt to hurry back to his cottage.

Mr. Trelawny was a great walker; very strong and very fleet. He strode along the beach, and though the Vicarage was two miles from Natt's cottage in the rocks, he was soon a good way beyond it.

He had just reached a point where the rocks, jutting out into the sea, formed a sort of cape, which was called Dead Man's Point, when several evidences of a recent wreck met his view.

What was his agony, when, picking up an oar that had been cast upon the rocks, he read thereon "*The Golden Bengal.*"

Pale with horror, and sick at heart, he quickly rounded the rocky cape.

It was a very lonely and secluded spot, and straight ahead, at a little distance, he saw, lying on the beach so near the waves that her long hair floated on the blue water like a black banner, the form of a woman—a lady to judge from her white drapery and elegant form,—and bending over her was a huge, shaggy, savage-looking fisherman, known to him by sight and by evil report.

This fellow, Dan Devrill by name, was a wife-beating, Sabbath-breaking, drunken wretch, more than suspected of being both a burglar and a wrecker.

The poor lady, probably in the hope of saving her jewels when first danger was anticipated on board, had thrust them into her pockets. The wrecker, whose first object

was to rifle those pockets, drew them forth, and they blazed and sparkled in the morning sun, and in the cruel, rapacious little eyes of Dan Devrill.

The wretch's huge, discoloured hands were already busy in trying to remove a watch and chain from the long, white throat.

The wrecker was so intent on plunder he did not hear Mr. Trelawny's step.

It did not sound much on the fine sand.

Mr. Trelawny drew swiftly near. He saw she was not dead—at least, though her eyes were closed, her face had not the contraction nor the ghastly hues of death.

The wrecker then savagely, and with a hideous oath, tried to rend the ear-rings from her small, beautiful ears.

She moved! She moaned!

She uttered a cry of pain and opened her large blue eyes, wild with terror as she saw the savage ruffian bending over her.

“Oh! you’re alive, my lady, are you?”

said the wrecker. “Alive and kicking, or will be soon,” he added, with another oath, “and like to give trouble. Well, dead men tells no tales, nor dead women either, let their tongues be ever so long, so here goes!” . . .

He drew a knife from his belt.

The lady raised her head, struggled, and screamed.

The wrecker’s hand was on her throat.

Mr. Trelawny, now close at hand, thinking to save a stranger, rushed forth and recognised his daughter, his Minna!

With a wild bound, and a wilder shout, he seized the wrecker by the collar, and, with the herculean strength of his powerful arm, increased tenfold by the excitement of the moment, he dragged the wretch from the spot, and dashed him against the rocks, at the base of which he fell stunned and bleeding.

His savage face had struck against a projecting angle of the rock, levelling his nose with his cheeks; and the hideous

gash that crossed that bad countenance must leave a frightful scar there through all his after life.

The shipwrecked lady had again sunk back insensible, and this time to all appearance dead. Her father raised her slender, wasted form in his strong arms, and sighed to find it so light a burthen.

How shrunken, how changed from what she was when last he had embraced her; then she might have served as a model for a Hebe!

Unseen by any mortal eye he bore her to the Vicarage.

The gardener had not yet arrived.

Old Dorcas was lighting her kitchen fire, and the Vicar carried Minna through the garden gate, and in at the glass door of his study, upstairs into the room which had been hers in her happy girlhood.

No one had inhabited it since her flight, and, except that old Dorcas kept it in beautiful order, and aired the bed periodi-

cally—prophesying that Miss Minna would come back to them when least expected—everything was just as it had been before Minna's departure.

Mr. Trelawny laid her down on the little snowy bed, with its curtains of white muslin and rose-coloured silk, in which she had slept so soundly, and dreamt such happy dreams; and then he went to summon Dorcas, and to acquaint her with the wonderful news.

A faint tinge of colour had returned to Minna's cheeks, and she had sighed and moaned. Her father therefore felt certain that she lived.

He tried to break the truth gently to Dorcas, but he was not at all prepared for the wild burst of rapture with which the devoted old woman heard that her darling, her nursling, her child, her young mistress was restored to them.

She fell down on her kness on the kitchen floor, and raising her streaming eyes to

Heaven, thanked the Father of all Mercies for having heard and answered her constant prayers. She laughed, she cried, she almost danced for joy, and was only silenced when her master sternly told her that her folly rendered her useless, and that while she was capering and giggling like a mad-woman, her young lady was perhaps dying for want of help.

Dorcas became quiet and silent enough when she saw the wreck, the shadow, the spectre of the once blooming and beautiful Minna lying on the snow-white bed in her own little room.

Mr. Trelawny ordered Dorcas to warm the bed while he lifted Minna on to the sofa; and when this was done, the poor old woman undressed her, and marked with streaming eyes and a bleeding heart how wasted and shrunken was the once richly-rounded form.

Minna lay in her own bed once more; but it was long, very long, before Mr.

Trelawny and Dorcas succeeded in restoring her to consciousness. Alas! when at length she opened her eyes and spoke, it was evident that reason had not returned with life.

She was incoherent and delirious. She fixed her eyes on her father and on old Dorcas, but she did not know them.

She rolled her head from side to side on her pillow, and moaned out, “ My child! my child! The waves, the dreadful waves! — they bear away — they engulf my child !”

Then she would scream and say,—

“ I hear *his* step. It is Jasper—it is my husband! Where shall I hide? Lolah! Lolah! where shall we hide the child? He has sworn he will kill us both unless I agree to forego my claims!—to give up my proofs of our private marriage,—and unless I connive at his wedding Miss Montresor! He loves her as he once loved me; but I will never, never do what would blacken

my fame for ever, and destroy the future of my child!"

"Poor dear! I know'd she was innocent —I always said she'd never done the thing that was wrong," said old Dorcas, weeping. "She be a wedded wife, she be, and a grand lady, forbye being what's more, an honest woman, which some grand ladies ain't. But the poor dear babe! that's drounded, in course that's gone to the bottom! It's lucky, poor lady, she be as she be, for when she comes to, it'll break her poor heart to think she've lost her child!"

Mr. Trelawny, who knew something of medicine (as all country clergymen should), and who had a few drugs at hand for the use of his poorer parishioners, mixed a sedative draught for Minna.

He ordered Dorcas to darken the room and to leave her for awhile. Old Dorcas obeyed, but every five minutes the faithful creature was at the door listening, as if her

own life was at stake, to Minna's sighs and moans.

Minna would remain quiet for a few minutes, apparently in a dreamless sleep. All at once she would scream out—

“Take me!—take me and my nurse and child! Take us in one of the boats, if the ship is doomed! The captain says there is no hope! . . . Brave, iron-hearted man! he will not leave the ship—he will go down with her. Two boats full of men—passengers, sailors—are launched on the furious waves! They are lowering another! Take us, take us! No other woman will venture, but I will, for I may save my child! . . . Thanks, thanks, brave man! They have heard a mother's prayer even amid the roar of the winds and waves, and the rattling of the thunder! . . . I hold my child in my arms! . . . Spare us, ye mountain waves! Spare us, ye winds! and oh, thou forked lightning, spare my child!”

“Poor dear!” said Dorcas, “she's going

all over the wreck in her poor dear mind!"

"Hush!" said the Vicar, "we shall learn how it happened."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Minna, "what a wild chorus was that!—the last shrill cry to Heaven of all on board! And see, see, see! The *Golden Bengal* goes down, down, down! —the great ship sinks, and our little boat weathers the storm! . . . Oh! the long, dark hours—how dreadful are they! How wildly old Lolah wails out that she has seen a spirit! . . . The other boats have perished! . . . By the lightning's flash I saw corpses floating, and a dead face with eyes horribly staring! . . . On, on, on we go! Well done, brave men; well done, little boat! My babe and I have life-belts! . . . Lolah, my poor old ayah, still moans out, 'The Angel of Death beckons! My last hour is come!' But see, but see!—there is a grey light in the East! . . . We are nearing shore! The Cornish coast, the

men say. Dear, dear coast of my native place! . . . Father, I come, I come!—forgive and bless me!"

The Vicar turned aside and wept; Dorcas sunk on her knees in prayer.

His daughter continued to moan out—

"‘Beware the dwarf rocks!’ cried a sailor! . . . Beware! too late, too late!—the boat strikes on one! She fills, she fills! The men rise up and she capsizes! We are in the water! but, thank Heaven, I can swim, and I have my life-belt! Old Lolah cries ‘The Spirit!’ and sinks; the men cling to each other. Two who can swim are prevented by those who cannot; they all go down together. But I—I have my baby in my arms, and the shore close by, when lo! a faintness comes over me! I am dizzy! I cannot see! . . . Where is my babe? My arms are empty. I die! I die! The waves, the waves, they bear away my child!"

CHAPTER IV.

“The waters wild went o'er 'her' child,
And she was left lamenting.”

Campbell.

MR. TRELAWNY waited and watched, until he perceived that the sedative had taken effect, and that Minna had sunk into a deep sleep.

Alas ! even in that sleep her white lips moved ; and the Vicar, bending down his ear to try to catch the syllables she murmured, felt his eyes grow moist with tears, for he could distinctly hear those heart-rending words, “My child ! my child ! The waves, the cruel waves, they will bear away my child !”

“Poor Minna !” said the Vicar, “thou hast caused me many a dreary day and

many a sleepless night, for the first commandment with promise thou didst rashly break. But yet, alas, my heart bleeds for thee ! Thy child, no doubt, perished when thy strength failed thee. And I have often marked that those who have repaid their own parents' love with treachery, disobedience, or ingratitude, are generally punished, even in this world, by or through their own children. The child is chosen by heaven to avenge the parent. Sometimes, by the long sickness or death of the heart's darling, the undutiful son or daughter is brought to know what parents can endure, and to repent what they have made their own suffer. Sometimes, by the ingratitude or disobedience of their children, they are led to think with anguish and remorse of their own defiance, thanklessness, and deceit to the fond parents now mouldering in the grave ! May Heaven comfort and support thee, my poor Minna, and enable thee to bear with patience the punishment of thy sin !”

The Vicar then left Minna to her vision-haunted sleep ; and, ordering Dorcas to be on the watch, he, after morning service, went back to the cape where he had left the wrecker, Dan Devrill, bleeding and insensible.

“ That villain,” thought the Vicar, “ richly deserves the gallows, and will probably be exalted to that dreadful eminence sooner or later; but I would not have him die by my hand—richly as he would have merited death—for his felon-coward knife was raised to stab to the heart the helpless woman whom Providence had saved from the wreck and snatched from the waves! How I wish I could get that desperate ruffian out of the neighbourhood! I must seek him in his own den if he is not where I left him. I have heard that he lives about a mile from ‘ Dead Man’s Point,’ in a wretched hovel, with a wife and children whom he beats and starves. They say, too, that, though he earns a good deal as a

fisherman, and alas ! in many lawless ways besides, that he spends in liquor and his other vile vices what ought to be devoted to the comforts and benefit of his wife and children. It is a dreadful place to go to, no doubt, but it is above all others to such places my Master sends me."

Most men would have felt some misgivings at the idea of entering alone and unarmed, the lair of such a wild beast as Dan Devrill.

But our Vicar was brave almost to temerity. Like the great Nelson himself, he might have asked, "What is fear?"

Fear at least of man and earthly perils, for no one lived in greater fear of his Heavenly Father's wrath; and yet it was that fear which is born of love—not a servile, coward fear, but that trembling anxiety not to be found wanting which we sometimes see in a good wife towards a husband whom she can reverence as well as

love, or in a dutiful child towards virtuous and wisely tender parents.

It was a relief to the Vicar's mind, when he reached Dead Man's Point, to find that the wrecker was no longer there.

By this time it was very low water.

There was a pool of dark blood on the spot where Devrill's head had sunk after striking against the rock.

There were drops of the same dark crimson along the sands and among the rocks. They acted as a trail which enabled the Vicar to track Devrill for more than a mile.

At that distance from Dead Man's Point the sand became coarse and moist, and the Vicar saw that it had recently been trodden by three pairs of large feet in hobnailed shoes.

He felt certain he was still on Devrill's track, for here and there he espied a drop of blood.

Devrill had two sons—probably in every

sense treading in his steps. They had perhaps come back in search of him, and had found him at Dead Man's Point and helped him home to his hovel.

Following these footsteps, Mr. Trelawny arrived in view of a miserable cottage built on a patch of land where there was a break in the rocks.

It was a tumbledown place, damp, disconsolate, and one-eyed, for though it had originally had two windows fronting the sea, one had been blocked up, and of the other, several panes were mended with paper, or stuffed with rag.

Some tattered, half-naked children, with shaggy, matted, dust-coloured hair, hollow eyes, wasted limbs, and very dirty faces, were languidly playing in the sun with some very old cards, as dirty as themselves.

It was dreadful to see excitement in the wolfish eyes and pinched faces of these little gamesters, and to hear oaths and impre-

cations, borrowed from the vile father, bursting from the hearts and lips of childhood.

Bab Devrill, the wrecker's wife, and mother of this vicious brood, with a haggard face and a form to match, barefooted, half clad, and her ragged hair turned up with a broken comb, had just come out, hearing a squabble, and foreseeing a fight, with a piece of dirty ragged rope in her hand.

Her threats were uttered in language quite in keeping with that the Vicar had heard with horror from her children's lips.

And yet he thought he recognised in this miserable wreck a certain Barbara Broome, who, some two and twenty years before, had been in Mrs. Trelawny's service, and who was then the neatest, rosiest, and prettiest girl in Pencombe.

He remembered that Mrs. Trelawny parted with her for "keeping company" with a young fellow of idle habits and bad

repute—a fisherman, and he had heard that she had ultimately married him.

Poor Barbara! hers was a very common fate!

The fate of a drunkard's wife.

She had tried hard at first to reform her husband, but had ended by taking to drink herself, to drown care!

She recognised her former master, and even *she* shrunk out of sight, hot with shame, and anxious to hide her rags and wretchedness.

But the Vicar entered the cottage, and Bab and her former master stood face to face.

Poor wretch! she smelt horribly of gin, but she dropped a curtsey, and, wiping an old straw-bottomed chair with her ragged apron, she said—

“Your servant, sir! Please to take a seat!”

“Mrs. Devrill, I think,” said the Vicar. He would not appear to remember her

as “Blooming Barbara,” he thought it would pain and humble her so much.

“Yes, your reverence,” said Bab.

“Where is your husband?” he asked.

“He’s been out fishing since six this morning, sir,” said Bab.

“Are you sure he is out fishing?” asked the Vicar.

“Quite sure, your reverence. He went out very early, and he told our two eldest lads, Dan and Bob, to come to him at Dead Man’s Point. They went out about eight, and haven’t been home since. *Did* your reverence want to see my man?”

“Yes, you may tell him when he comes in, that Mr. Trelawny, Vicar of Pencombe, called to speak to him. Did you ever hear that name before, Mrs. Devrill?” . . .

The wretched woman burst into tears.

“Oh, sir,” she said, “no wonder as you don’t know me! Down in the world as I am, in want and dirt, and rags and wretchedness. I was well off, and sir, I

was housemaid at Pencombe Vicarage in your dear good lady's time!"

"You were Barbara Broome, I think," said the Vicar.

"Yes, your reverence, and if I'd listened to my missus, who's now in Heaven, bless her! I'd be Barbara Broome now, and your housemaid still. I'd good looks, and good health, and good clothes, and good food, and money laid by (a tidy bit), and a good place, and a happy home, and I, like a fool as I was, give all up and pleased my eye to plague my heart, and see what I'm come to?"

"I fear *he* drinks, does he not?" said the Vicar.

Bab—a little maudlin from her own morning potations—sobbed out—

"Ah, that's just where it is, your reverence!"

"And he has led you to drink too! Don't deny it! You cannot deceive me. Well, when things come to the worst they mend."

"They is come to the worst, indeed, sir," said Bab. "We've neither food nor firing, and the parish wont relieve us unless we go into the house, and Dan would rather die. He's such a chap for liberty," and she sobbed bitterly.

"Barbara," said the Vicar, "You were a good girl once, and when I prepared you for confirmation, no girl knew her Bible and her duty better than you did."

"Oh, your reverence," cried Barbara, wiping her eyes with her apron. "Don't talk of those happy times. It breaks my poor heart. My dear, dear missus took such a pride in me the day I was confirmed, and gave me such a lovely white muslin dress and petticoat, and with her own dear hands she put a white veil on my head, and she praised my hair. I'd fine, thick glossy hair then: look at it now! And when the Lord Bishop put his hand on my head, I felt all of a glow like; the grace of God

seemed to shine into my heart! And now see what it's all come to!"

"But, Barbara!" said the Vicar, "you, who remember those times so well, you cannot have forgotten all you learnt at the Vicarage. *You* know there is more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentence. Have you a Bible here?"

"No, sir," sobbed Barbara, "I have *nothing* here!"

The Vicar took out his own pocket Bible. He selected several passages, and pointing them out to the wretched woman, begged her to read and ponder them. He then said, "Keep this Bible till I bring you another. I cannot give you this. It was my father's. Those are your children? We must make them decent, and then they must go to school. I will see you again shortly. I came to try to induce your husband to leave this place. He has done

things here that may bring him to trouble. If he will go away for a time I will see to your welfare, and that of your children. For the present," he added, putting his hand in his pocket, "here is something for your wants. Promise me not to spend one penny of this money in gin or liquor of any kind, but in food and firing. My housekeeper shall get you and your children shoes and stockings, and decent clothing. We have a clothing club now at Pencombe, and Mrs. Penryn and Miss Priscilla Penryn are at its head."

"Oh, your reverence, how can I thank you?" sobbed Bab; "how can I prove my gratitude?"

"Only by turning over a new leaf yourself, Barbara, and resolving to work with me, and to train up your children in the way they should go! It makes my heart bleed to see children who ought to be at school, clean and tidy, in dirt and rags, wrangling over those filthy, demoralizing

cards—cursing, swearing, and reviling each other the while."

The Vicar then took his leave, Barbara sobbing out her thanks.

He was scarcely gone, when, from an inner room, bare, black, and wretched as that the Vicar had just quitted, a hoarse voice was heard shouting out "Bab," and accompanying that name with curses and threats.

Bab put the Bible in her pocket and hid the money in her bosom.

She then went into the inner room.

There, on a wretched mattress spread on the floor, lay Dan Devrill, looking ghastly and hideous with his broken nose and the gash across his face, and his shaggy head bound up with a dirty old cloth.

"Whoever was thee a-jawing and palavering with, ye jade, all this time, and I fit to sink from loss o' blood and want o' a drop of somehut," growled Dan.

Bab told him that the Vicar of Pencombe

had been to see him, and to advise him to leave the neighbourhood, or it might be the worse for him.

"Thee warn't such a born, stoopid fool as to let *him* know I wor here, I hope," said Dan, with a hideous oath.

"No," said Bab.

"I'd have punched thy head and broken every bone in thy yellow skin if thee had," said Ben. "And as for 'flitting,' it's just what I'm roominating. When I gets over this fall, I'll go with Dan and Bob and settle for a bit, higher up in Devonshire, and thee and the little uns must go into 'the house.' Give me the gin-bottle."

"There's not a drop left," said Barbara.

"Then," said Dan, with an oath, "it's thee've drained it. Go up to the 'Good Intent' and get it filled, if thee can, and if thee can't, don't show thy ugly mug here again."

But Barbara had been touched to the heart by the Vicar's words. She would

not spend *one* penny of the money he had given her in gin or any other intoxicating liquor.

She walked to the nearest shop.

She bought a little tea and sugar, bread and cheese, and a candle, and also a bit of scrag of mutton to make some broth for her husband.

She also ordered a sack of coals, and some firewood.

That evening, even that wretched cottage looked a little cheerful; for a good fire blazed in the grate, and a candle gave light to the table, on which was food.

Bab dared not go in to Dan herself, to say she could get no gin, but that she had got tea and sugar, bread and cheese, and a bit of meat to make him some broth, through the Vicar's kindness.

She sent in her eldest son—a sturdy fellow—with a basin of broth and some bread.

Devrill was so faint, and the broth was

so savoury, he took it eagerly, though with many a curse. And then asked for more, and some of the meat in it.

The hungry children had a good meal that evening, and their mother told them to whom they owed it, and made them say grace before and after supper, and bade them pray God to bless the good Vicar of Pencombe.

Dan Devrill had no spirits during his convalescence.

He made his boys try to get the black bottle filled, but in vain.

The landlord of the “Good Intent” would not let Dan increase his score till he had “paid up.”

Owing to this enforced abstinence, the wound soon healed, but the nose *was* flattened, and a very disfiguring scar crossed the countenance which had once had an evil beauty of its own.

When he was able to go out, Dan Devrill, as he had intended, remained with his two

eldest sons, and left his poor wife and little ones—as he thought—to go to the union, but they had a friend in the Vicar, and there were better things in store for them. However, this is prospective.

CHAPTER V.

“Tired nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep.”

Young.

E must now accompany the Vicar home, after his visit to the wrecker’s hovel.

He found faithful old Dorcas watching at Minna’s door.

Dorcas told her master, with great triumph and joy, that her dear young missus, had opened her blessed eyes, had recognised her, called her dear old Dorcas, and taken a cup of tea and a bit of toast from her hand, but that she had immediately afterwards closed her eyes and dropped off to sleep.

Just as she spoke there was a sound of wheels and horses’ hoofs, and, looking from

the landing-place window, the Vicar saw a carriage and four drive up to the Vicarage gate.

Mr. Trelawny recognised the livery of the Earl of Altamount.

“Whatever brings he here at this time in the day?” said old Dorcas, “and not a stroke done to the drawing-room!”

“Show his lordship into my study, Dorcas,” said the Vicar.

He was very pale.

He too was wondering what *could* bring the Earl to the Vicarage at all. And why so late a riser as his Lordship, should be there in the forenoon, he could not conceive!

A visit from the Earl had been of late so very rare an honour!

Could he have discovered anything about the private marriage of his son?—for the Vicar now felt sure there had been a private marriage—and if so, was he come to upbraid *him*, Minna’s father! and accuse him of connivance and collusion?

A flush suffused the Vicar's face at the thought.

He was one of those men of nice honour whose cheeks burn even in the solitude of their own chambers at the bare thought that anything can throw a doubt on their integrity and truth.

"Courage!" said the Vicar to himself. "My conscience is clear; I am not to blame. I hope it is so—devoutly do I hope she *is* his wife, all traitor as he is; but I do not *know* it.... However, I will not tremble and quail. I am a gentleman, and this Earl is nothing more. He has a title and a coronet, I have none; but 'a man's a man for a' that;' and if my poor girl has indeed married his son she has the worst of the bargain, and so I will tell the proud Earl to his face!"

As Mr. Trelewney crossed the landing he heard the well-known voice of the Earl, of his son, Lord Derwent, and of little Mole-hill, his lordship's solicitor.

"There must be something very important in the wind," said the Vicar to himself, "else why should the Earl bring Molehill here? Well, I must face him. So I'll do at once what is to do, and Heaven defend the right."

CHAPTER VI.

"His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles,
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate,
His tears pure messengers from his heart;
His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth."

Shakspeare.

NEVER before had the Vicar of Pencombe felt afraid to face any man!

The feelings which flushed his cheek and quickened his pulse, as he left his daughter's room and slowly repaired to the library to receive the Earl and his party, were as new as they were distressing and humiliating to him.

"The princely heart of innocence" had always throbbed in his brave breast.

It did so still—but hitherto his soul had been above disguise.

He had had no secret burthen weighing on his heart; and *now* he knew, or thought he knew, something of vast importance to the Earl; but that something his poor ill-used daughter's safety from an “Honourable” scoundrel made it imperative he should hide.

As he descended the stairs he saw through the quaint old oriel window by which they were lighted, a young fellow with fish for sale, who had made his way round from the back premises, where such people always held their colloquies with old Dorcas, who was a great driver of bargains.

The lad was apparently trying to look in at the drawing-room window.

A young girl whose services Dorcas had borrowed of a neighbour to help her in the kitchen, and whom she supposed to be too stupid and too young to take much notice of anything, passing at the time to gather some parsley for Dorcas, was ac-

costed by the lad in question; and Mr. Trelawny opening the staircase window, heard the youth say to the girl—

“How’s the poor lady as wor saved from the wreck?”

“What lady?” said the girl; “I’ve seed no lady?”

“What do you want here, my lad?” cried Mr. Trelawny, hastening down and opening the front door.

“I’ve some fine fresh fish, your reverence, for sale,” said the lad.

The girl had hurried away at the sound of the Vicar’s voice.

“We want none to-day,” said the Vicar; “and if we did, it’s at the back-gate and the kitchen door you must offer it.”

“Beg pardon, your reverence,” said the lad, “I’m a stranger here!”

And he hurried away; but though an old peaked cap concealed the upper part of his half-averted face, and a coloured hand-kerchief the lower, Mr. Trelawny thought

the features were familiar to him; and it struck him all at once that they bore a strong resemblance to those of Dan Devrill.

The Vicar had not time at this moment (the Earl and his friends awaiting him in the library) to meditate on the unpleasant probability that the wrecker had sent his son as a spy, to try to find out whether the lady whom the Vicar had saved was at the Vicarage.

He could not keep Lord Altamount waiting any longer, but he called to Dorcas and told her to send off a young fellow with fish for sale who had got round to the front of the house.

Dorcas, at the sound of her master's voice, came from the kitchen with a flushed face, and the spit in her hand, and said—

“I've druv him off, sir! . . . I found him at the scullery door, how he got there I don't know, and Nancy, as can't say bo to a goose when I'm by, a chattering to un as fast as ever fast.”

"He is here for no good purpose, Dorcas," said the Vicar in a low voice; "keep the back gate locked, and send Nancy back to her home. That young fellow is the son of the wretch from whom I rescued your young mistress. He's here as a spy."

"Heaven preserve us!" said Dorcas. "But he'd better not come here again. I'll make the place too hot to hold him, sir."

* * * *

Mr. Trelawny saw at a glance that his fears were unfounded.

The Earl had not, for many years, shaken hands so cordially with the Vicar as on this occasion.

His lordship even condescended to call him "dear Trelawny," and "Harry," as in their old days of college intimacy.

It was an unspeakable relief to the proud and sensitive Trelawny, to find that the Earl had not the slightest suspicion of a

private marriage, or even an attachment, between his son Jasper and Minna Trelawny.

His Lordship asked after the Vicar's "beautiful daughter," and remarked "that it was no wonder so handsome a young woman should prefer London to Pencombe!"

After a good deal of pleasant talk and flattery, which from the lips of the great is always beguiling to those beneath them in the social scale, the real object of this condescending visit came out.

It seemed that the Earl of Altamount had just received a telegram, announcing the sudden death of Lord Pontypool (father of Lord Bellairs, the member for Pencombe).

Lord Bellairs having thus become a peer and a member of the House of Lords, his seat in the House of Commons was of course vacant.

Lord Derwent, eldest son of the Earl of

Altamount, and formerly a pupil of Mr. Trelawny's, had long been very anxious to get into Parliament.

Here was an excellent chance. He was a pale, delicate young man, but of a very ambitious, restless nature, very vain too, and, being a fluent speaker, he believed himself to be an orator.

He burned to hold forth in Parliament.

The Earl, who, if not a great politician, had a strong party spirit, was intensely anxious, by getting his son and nominee returned, to strengthen his own and weaken the opposite party.

Lord Derwent then had his father's interest, but he had powerful rivals already in the field.

Every vote thus became of immense importance, and it was to canvass the Vicar, that the Right Honourable Augustus, Earl of Altamount, his eldest son, Lord Derwent, and Molehill, the family solicitor, appeared

thus early at the Vicarage, with smiles as warm and bright as the rays of the noon-day sun, and almost as evanescent.

While, in answer to the Vicar's particular questions as to his views and politics, Lord Derwent was taking shelter in general professions of devotion to the interests of "the ancient and loyal borough of Pencombe," the Countess of Altamount—with another fine lady—drove to the Vicarage gate, in a magnificent equipage, and fluttered into the Vicar's quiet little study with her spinster sister. Lady Honoria was all fashion and *finesse*, smiles and softness, marabouts and manœuvres.

She delighted in the excitement of canvassing, and Lady Honoria was bent on "bribery and corruption" in the shape of coaxing words, and, if necessary, kisses, after the bygone fashion of the days of the beautiful Georgina, Duchess of Devonshire.

The Vicar, understanding from Molehill,

the Earl's man of business, that the candidates opposed to Lord Derwent were Lieut.-General Dunkeld, a Tory of the old school, and a Colonel Turvy, a red-hot Radical, and overcome, in spite of himself, by the Earl's freedom and the Countess's flattering, promised his vote.

He agreed indeed to Lord Altamont's request, that he would "plump for Derwent."

He refused a pressing invitation to dine that evening at the Castle, for he could not bear to leave his Minna—his recovered treasure—in her precarious state. Having gained their object, the Earl and Countess, with their companions, departed in their respective carriages to continue their canvass, Molehill urging all possible speed in getting at Mr. Penryn, of Penryn Manor House, before he, or rather his aunt and his wife, who governed and guided him, should have heard (had the Vicar known it, he would have refused to "plump

for Derwent)—that Sir George Manley, a moderate Conservative, had entered the field.

Having handed the Countess to her carriage, and gazed his last at her artificial roses and artificial smiles, the Vicar said to himself, “I shall see no more of my lord and my lady, I daresay, when once Lord Derwent is in Parliament. No matter; I did very well without their notice for two years, and so I shall again. I will just step up to my poor Minna’s room to ascertain that she is quiet, and then I will walk down to Penryn Manor House, and consult with dear, good, gentle Mrs. Penryn, and that ‘strong-minded woman,’ Miss Priscilla—poor Penryn’s aunt—what can be done in the way of a respectable outfit for the drunken wrecker’s penitent wife and starving children. I am resolved, with my Master’s help and blessing, to get that incorrigible scoundrel, Dan Devrill, out of this neighbourhood, and to make his wife

and little ones decent, useful members of society, hard working, sober, sabbath-keeping Christians. Dan is a slippery fellow, and no one ever knows where to find him, else I ought to give him in charge for his vile attempt at robbery, and perhaps murder, this very morning ; but then there must be an investigation before a magistrate, and Minna's rescue—with all that it involves—must come to light ! Her base husband would know ere long where she is, and either insist on her return to him, to kill her by his cruelty, or plot with such a villain as Devrill some means of destroying her, and thus my hands are tied, and justice defeated."

The Vicar found Minna sleeping calmly. Much relieved in his mind on this account, he ordered old Dorcas to be on the watch in case she should chance to wake, and to feed her sparingly with strong chicken jelly.

Luckily there was some in the larder.

It had been made for a consumptive parishioner, and patient of the Vicar's.

“Stew another chicken, Dorcas,” he said, “and divide the jelly you have ready, between poor young Blake and . . . my daughter.”

He then took his hat and went out, directing his steps towards Penryn Manor House.

As Mr. Trelawny turned into the lane which skirted his own paddock, he saw—for he had the eye of a hawk—something red fluttering in the summer breeze just where a dry ditch and a hawthorn hedge divided his premises from a patch of furze-grown common.

Resolved to see what it was—for intense anxiety about Minna made him attach importance to every trifle—he turned out of the lane, crossed the little angle of common, and came upon the fisherman lad and Nancy, the girl whom Dorcas had dismissed and sent home.

They were dining together on some bread and cold meat which Dorcas had given to Nancy for her dinner, and young Dan Devrill—for it was he—was lying on his stomach, and with a small telescope to his eye, was watching the window of the very bedroom in which Minna lay, and which, on account of the heat, was partly open.

Old Dorcas stood at that window, first spreading out a lady's night-dress in the sun to air, and then taking up a basin of broth and cooling it with a spoon.

“Can’t ye slip back, Nan, saying you’ve left somehut behind ye, and steal up into that ere room, and peep in as quiet as a mouse, and then come and tell me what you’ve zeed! I’ll give ye a smart pair o’ ear-drops next week if you will, and I’ll give my sweetheart, Bet, the cold shoulder, and keep company wi’ you, maybe,” said young Dan, not hearing the Vicar’s step on the soft sod.

“ Will ye though ?” said the girl, grinning from ear to ear, “ then hear goes !”

She turned to scramble out of the ditch, and saw the, to her, terrible face and form of the Vicar.

He seized her by the shoulder, and at her scream, young Dan, taking the telescope from his eye, turned round, and wished himself a hundred miles off!

“ I have a great mind to send for a constable, and have you taken up, you young vagrant !” said the Vicar.

“ I ain’t doing no harm, your reverence !” said young Dan, stammering and turning very red. “ I’m a stranger in these parts, and dead beat with hunger and travelling so far on a empty stomach, and this here gal give me a bit o’ her dinner. Zure your reverence can’t blame a Christin for that.”

“ You are the son of Dan Devrill,” said the Vicar. “ What *he* is you know as well, if not better, than I do. Now, mark me,

if I ever catch you in this neighbourhood again I'll have you taken up at once, and very likely before I send for a constable I may give you a hiding, you'll not forget in a hurry, for lurking about my premises, and spying at my windows. So much for you, my lad! Now, for your father, tell him from me that if he is not off before three days are over his head, I shall have him before a magistrate on charges he can guess at, and that imprisonment and hard labour for many a long year will be his portion, as he will have sense enough to know, if he's sober when you give him my orders. Now be off; and if you value a whole skin, my lad, never show your face here again."

Young Dan got up and off, as fast as he could, and the Vicar taking Nancy by the hand, led her to the school, and ordered the mistress to keep her close, and watch her well.

CHAPTER VII.

“Whereunto is money good?
Who has it not wants hardihood,
Who has it has much trouble and care,
Who once has had it has despair.”

S the Vicar passed through Pencombe, on his way to the old Manor House, he saw with a flush of surprise and displeasure that he had been duped by the great Earl and little Molehill, his solicitor.

The dark blue placards of the old Tory candidate, and the yellow ones of the Radical, Colonel Turvy, met his view, but to his surprise and discomfiture, he also saw on paler blue posters the name of Sir George Manley, a moderate Conservative, whose politics exactly coincided with his own.

"A regular trick, a mean plot!" said the Vicar to himself, "worthy of little Molehill, but disgraceful to the Earl of Altamount, and entitling him to add gloomy *dis* to his Right Honourable name. However, I have given my word, my promise, and I cannot break either, let who will be member for Pencombe!"

The Penryns were one of the oldest families in Cornwall, but much impoverished.

Of all the fine estate, the woods, the fisheries, the broad lands, and the splendid preserves which had formerly belonged to Penryn of Penryn, nothing now remained but the quaint, rambling, many-gabled old Manor House, the old-fashioned garden, and a small home farm.

These, and the barren title of Lord of the Manor of Penryn, formed all the glories of a house which in former times had intermarried with that of Altamount.

The present Penryn of Penryn was

a very quiet, pale, thin, and amiable man.

A classical scholar of great repute even at Oxford, where up to forty years of age he had led—as a fellow of Oriel—the safe, calm, irresponsible life of learning and routine exactly suited to him; unfortunately for him, on his fortieth birthday an old friend, who had just married, arrived with his wife and his wife's sister at the Angel, Oxford.

Mr. Penryn was invited to dine with the wedding party, and lionize Oxford with them.

He fell in love with the bride's sister. Love at forty, like the measles, or any other malady, is all the worse to bear, for coming late in life.

Penryn threw up his fellowship, and his father having been some years dead, he settled with his bride at Penryn Manor House.

The woman of his choice was all a wife

should be, but she soon discovered that in spite of the intellect which she so revered, her husband was—morally considered—a weak man.

He had no will of his own, no resistance in his nature, no power of saying “No.”

Mrs. Penryn united strong principle and great firmness to the sweetest and most gentle of manners, and without her husband or any of his friends knowing it, she led him into the right path, and kept him there.

In this she was aided by his aunt, a strong-minded spinster, Miss Priscilla Penryn.

One beautiful, high-spirited, manly boy added to the happiness of Penryn’s wedded life.

He was six years old at the time of the Vicar’s visit to Mrs. Penryn, and already he gave evidence of the rich heritage of his father’s intellect and his mother’s courage, firmness, and fortitude.

He united the personal advantages of both, for Penryn of Penryn had the fine features of his handsome race; but yet his was a nerveless face: there was sweetness of temper and great mental cultivation to be traced there, but that all important attribute of man, "will," had been forgotten in his composition. His brow was high, but rather retreating. His eyes looked kindly on every one, and his mouth, rather weak and irresolute, seemed formed for amiable acquiescence and a perpetual "Yes," but it appeared as if it never could pronounce a resolute "No."

He was dressed in grey. He was fond of neutral tints, and they harmonized with his character. Mrs. Penryn, who was of Scottish extraction, had the rich golden hair, the exquisite complexion, the fine form, and winning loveliness of the land of Mary Stuart, Queen at once of beauty and of Scotland.

Lavishly gifted by nature, little Paul

Penryn was a child of singular personal beauty, and moral and mental promise.

The maternal element was strong in the boy.

For several generations the Penryns, once a brave and warlike race, had been, like Paul's father, weak and easily duped.

James I. is supposed to have owed his moral pusillanimity to the terrors of his mother for months before his birth.

A similar cause, in the troublous times of the second Charles, was said to account for the timid and nervous natures of all the males of the house of Penryn.

It had brought them from grandeur and opulence to a bare competence, but the females of the family had escaped its paralysing influence. And now, in little Paul Penryn, at least as far as one could judge of a boy at his early age, the spirit and the fortitude of William Wallace had descended, with his blood, through Mrs. Penryn, who was of that hero's lineage.

And thus, taught by his learned father, and trained by his virtuous mother and intrepid great-aunt—Paul Penryn promised “to give the world assurance of a man,” and of a Christian, a scholar, and a gentleman.

CHAPTER VIII.

“What is it that you would impart to me?”

Shakspeare.

 HE Vicar found traces of recent excitement in the generally calm features of Mr., Mrs., and Miss Priscilla Penryn.

The noble party of canvassers, the Earl and Countess with their party, had just driven from the gate of the Manor House, but this time defeated and discomfited by female wit and will.

Miss Priscilla, who, strong-minded as she thought herself, had her weak points—one of which was pride of pedigree—was always sore on the subject of the hauteur and slights of the Earl and his family; and when at length they came, all smiles and

sunshine, she suspected the reason, and resolved to outwit them.

She was a little bit of a politician, a friend of Sir George Manley's, and she knew he had been asked to stand. She therefore took counsel with Mrs. Penryn, and just as the carriages of the Earl and Countess drove up, the ladies got Mr. Penryn to promise to "plump for Manley," with whose opinions he, or rather they, agreed. Great was the delight of Aunt Pris, and great the discomfiture of the noble party of vote-hunters, when, after wasting a great number of fine speeches, and going into sham raptures about little Paul, in reply to the Earl's affectionate entreaty that his dear friend Penryn would "plump for Derwent," he was told he had promised his vote to Manley.

The Earl, on hearing this, lost his temper a little; and, as Penryn had no fight in him, Miss Pris flew to the rescue, and fairly beat the Earl and his party out of the field.

The Vicar found the pale cheek of Penryn of Penryn slightly flushed, and little Paul in high favour with his aunt. The boy was red, and hot, and panting, for he had bravely rescued his favourite cat (a snow-white Angora) from a dog of the Countess's, who had flown at poor little "Lillywhite."

The Vicar, as he took Paul on his knee, and heard his account of poor pussy's peril and rescue, thought he had never seen so noble and brave a child.

He was almost ashamed to own to the old Amazon, "Aunt Pris," that he had been wheedled into promising his vote to Lord Derwent, but she soon found out that he was pledged to do so, and she did not spare him.

Mrs. Penryn listened with lively interest to the Vicar's account of the wretched Dan Devrill's starving wife and children.

She promised to supply from the

clothing club all that was necessary for a neat and comfortable outfit; and little Paul, who had been listening with intense interest to Mr. Trelawny's account of the Devrill family, slipped from the Vicar's knee, left the room, and came back with his little money-box in his hand.

"Mamma," he said, "I don't care about a box of tools now; I can do with the old hammer and saw. May I give my five and sevenpence to the poor woman and children Mr. Trelawny saw without food and clothes?"

"You may, Paul," said Mrs. Penryn, "but are you *sure* you will not be sorry to give up the box of tools you have so long saved your money to get. I cannot afford to buy them for you."

"I am quite sure I should not like to have them, now that I can do so much good with my money, mamma!" said the boy, putting the five and sevenpence into the Vicar's hand.

No wonder that Mrs. Penryn caught the little fellow to her heart.

No wonder the Vicar gazed with moistened eyes at the glowing face of a child who, in his seventh year, could gladly, and of his own accord, forego a long-coveted toy, to spend the money he had saved on the poor and needy.

No wonder Mr. Penryn's pale cheek flushed with paternal pride; and no wonder Aunt Pris gave Paul a peppermint out of her own box and her own pocket, and whispered to the Vicar, "'As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.' I have taken great pains with the moral training of that boy; and so has his mother."

At this moment a fly drove up to the gate.

It was to convey Mrs. Penryn and Miss Priscilla to a fancy bazaar held in the grounds of a Rectory some twelve miles off.

The Rector and his wife were intimate friends of the Penryns.

The bazaar was held for the benefit of female orphans in delicate health, and Mrs. Penryn and Miss Priscilla had contributed a large amount of gifts—the former elegant specimens of fancy work (in which she was never excelled), the latter a great number of very ugly poke-bonnets, trimmed and lined with dark green calico, a quantity of coarse woollen jackets, and a dozen sets of under clothing, the texture of which would have better suited the hide of a rhinoceros than the delicate skin of an invalid girl; but “Miss Pris” had very Spartan notions, and carried them out in her own person as well as in theory.

Mrs. Penryn and Miss Priscilla had agreed (although both disliked leaving home and Mr. Penryn) to dine and pass the night at Rockland Rectory.

Mr. Penryn, although warmly pressed to accompany them, had been advised, by his wife and his aunt, not to go.

He was not at all the sort of man to resist

the half-coaxing, half-intimidating pertinacity of the lady stall-keepers.

Indeed, at the only fancy bazaar he had ever attended, he had been cajoled or bullied out of every penny he had in his purse ; nor that alone ; when his pocket was emptied his fair tormentors insisted on putting his name down to raffles and lotteries, so that, in the course of a few days, he had to pay four pounds fifteen, and all he had to show for his money was a smoking-cap, a cigar-case, quite useless, as he never smoked ; a white satin kettle-holder, a white muslin pen-wiper, a pair of slippers with a fox's head embroidered on the toes, and too narrow for any full-grown human foot ; and a berceaunette for a doll !

Mr. Trelawny took his leave after he had handed Mrs. Penryn and Miss Pris into the fly. The ladies at the last moment seemed very loth to depart.

Aunt Pris said, "I wish we were not going, or that we had insisted on having

my nephew and little Paul with us. I feel as if something unfortunate were sure to happen during our absence; but of course it's all fancy. Thank heaven I'm too strong-minded to believe in presentiments."

* * * *

Miss Pris was right when, with her long snipe-like nose, by spectacles bestrid, she scented danger in the air.

But even she, keen-witted as she was, could never have formed the most remote idea what that danger was. We must enlighten the reader on this subject.

In Mr. Penryn's Oxford days, he, and many other young men of his acquaintance, led into debt by coaxing and accommodating Oxford tradesmen, had borrowed money of a shy, laughing, pleasant, but very deep bill-discounter, named "Downy."

The heavy interest exacted by Downy had been the curse of Mr. Penryn's early life. That was Downy senior. Downy

senior had a son—"Downy junior"—who inherited all his father's pleasantries of manner, exacted the same rate of interest, was equally remorseless and persevering, but had—what Downy senior had never had—a passion for speculation. Old Downy was no more.

Young Downy, now in his turn fast becoming old Downy, had left Oxford for London, and was not only a bill-discounter but a great and daring public speculator.

All sorts of companies, railways, joint stock banks, and other ventures of the same kind, boasted the name of "Sligo Downy, Esq., " on their lists of shareholders.

Among other speculations, a mining company had been formed to work some supposed mines not very far from Penryn Manor House.

Now Sligo Downy, who knew the history of all his father's old clients, and who had been acquainted with James Penryn, a

younger brother of Penryn of Penryn Manor House, was aware that James, who was a widower, and in the army, and who had died abroad, had left the sum of one thousand pounds to his only child, Ann Penryn, but that he had made his brother her guardian and trustee.

The thousand pounds were in the Three per Cents, and were to remain there until Ann married or became of age. The half-yearly dividend of this sum was always received by Mr. Penryn, and paid regularly for Ann's expenses to Mrs. Macpherson, her mother's sister, a Scotch lady of many virtues, among which economy was the most remarkable.

So well did this lady manage, that Ann's thirty pounds per annum not only covered Ann's expenses, but went a good way towards those of the very thrifty household.

So far Mr. Penryn had had no trouble about his trusteeship.

His brother James was, perhaps, the only

person in the world who had ever looked up to Penryn of Penryn, or had ever felt any confidence in him as a man of business.

Sligo Downy had once since Penryn's marriage—namely, during his honeymoon, which he had spent in London—tried to renew some sort of business transactions with Mr. Penryn, and to tempt him to speculate ; but his specious arguments, his half-coaxing, half-bullying remarks, and his jokes about “petticoat government” and “apron strings,” were overheard by Miss Pris, who was of the wedding party, and who had retired into the adjoining bedroom at Downy's approach.

Flushed and furious, she marched in to prevent her nephew's falling a victim to the flattery, ridicule, and misrepresentations of the bill-discounting speculator, Sligo Downy.

The latter took his leave, fairly outwitted and defeated.

Finding himself, however—on business

connected with the new mining company—at the “Penryn Arms,” an inn which furnished the fly which was to take Mrs. and Miss Penryn to the fancy fair, and overhearing some remarks of the drivers which let him into the fact that Mrs. Penryn and Miss Pris were to pass the night at Rockland Rectory, the schemer, like a spider spinning his web for a fly, began to plan a visit to his father’s old client, Penryn of Penryn Manor House.

About an hour later, the fly drove from the Manor House gate, and while Mr. Penryn was adding a very erudite note to a translation of Sophocles which he was editing, and while Paul lay on the rug at his father’s feet, playing with Lilywhite, his pet cat, Sligo Downy saw the fly containing Mrs. Penryn and Miss Pris drive past the inn, while he hid himself behind the curtains of the bow window.

“Now or never,” he said to himself. “I can do what I like with Penryn now

those women are out of the way ; and, once done, and the thousand pounds trust money sold out of the Three per Cents, and invested for Ann Penryn's benefit in my new 'Land's End Mining Company,' what care I for Penryn's pretty little wife, or his stiff-necked, long-tongued old aunt? So here goes ! Fortune favours the brave."

CHAPTER IX.

"Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures."

Dr. Samuel Johnson.

HAT was a shrewd old bachelor who determined at last to marry, because, as he said, "when he had a wife he should have a protector."

There are a great many perils, small in their way, but yet very tormenting, from which nothing but a good, firm, sensible wife can protect a man. From the petty tyranny of hired housekeepers, the peculations of charwomen, the overcharges of laundresses, and their ruthless rending off of buttons, from all these the bachelor is protected as soon as he takes to himself a wife.

The timid and credulous old fellow who

lives in abject dread of the long tongue, short answers, and black looks of the maid-of-all-work whose advertisement had so captivated him by its professions of good humour, activity, and the desire to be useful and agreeable, handy and economical, can only be freed from such debasing thraldom by matrimony. But of all men, an absent, timid, amiable bookworm like Mr. Penryn, who could not bear to give pain or to say “no,” most needs a brave and loving wife, devoted to his interests, to save him from falling a prey to deceivers and manœuvrers of all ages and ranks in life, and of both sexes.

Well did Sligo Downy know that his only chance was to avail himself of the rare opportunity now afforded him of seeing Penryn of Penryn without his protectors.

Only once before in his wedded life had Mr. Penryn been thus left to himself. He was deep in his classical researches when the library door was thrown open, and

Sligo Downy, all smiles and high spirits, was announced.

At first he said nothing about his real object, but spoke of himself as a most prosperous man—come down on business connected with “the Land’s End Mining Company”—and added, while a tear of plausibility moistened his eye, that, finding himself in the immediate neighbourhood of so old a friend, he could not refrain from calling to have a chat over old times, and to pay his respects to Mrs. Penryn and Miss Priscilla.

Sligo affected great surprise and regret when he heard they were from home.

Penryn of Penryn, the soul of hospitality, pressed Sligo Downy to dinner, and got out two bottles of choice old wine to do him honour.

After dinner, and when the two decanters were empty, Sligo Downy began to unfold his scheme.

Penryn was a little excited and confused,

—a very little wine affected him, and he had taken a good deal.

Sligo Downy's plan was to get Penryn of Penryn up to town at once. The fly which was to call, nominally for him, would, he hoped, convey Penryn too to the station in time for the Express.

At first Mr. Penryn recoiled with horror from any idea of meddling with the trust money, but after a magnum of claret and a jug of punch had been added to the dessert, he began to see with Sligo Downy's eyes, and to agree, for his little niece and ward's sake, to invest the thousand pounds trust money in a speculation *sure* to yield fifty per cent., while in the funds “a beggarly three per cent. was all it produced.”

At this point the wily Downy threw out hints about “petticoat government” and female domination.

Penryn of Penryn, grown valiant in his cups, laughed at the idea that *he* was in the slightest degree hen-pecked, and agreed to

set off at once with Downy. Just as he had consented to this, and while Downy, in a fever of impatience and anxiety, was doing his best to accelerate Penryn's movements, the fly on which Downy kept his eye, moved on a little, to make way for a large mourning coach drawn by four black horses.

What could the great black vehicle stop at the Manor House gate for ? Nay, more, what does the coachman in black mean by driving up to the door, descending from the box, and opening the gate ?

Penryn of Penryn is as much amazed and mystified as Sligo Downy himself, but all is soon explained.

Mrs. Penryn, pale as death, and her gay attire torn and soiled, rushes in to tell her husband that their fly horse had taken fright at a gipsy's tent, and had kicked over the traces and upset the fly as they were going down a steep hill some two miles from Rockland Rectory.

Miss Pris had, in her alarm, thrown herself out of the carriage window into a green pond, covered with duck-weed and slime.

Mrs. Penryn had been thrown into the road. What had become of the driver they did not know; but a mourning-coach returning from the grand funeral procession of Lord Launceston passing at the time, the coachman had not only helped Miss Pris out of the pond, but had agreed (for a consideration) to convey the two ladies back to the Manor House.

They were in no condition for the bazaar.

Miss Pris emerged from the mourning-coach, her bonnet crushed, herself wet to the skin, and covered from head to foot with green slime and duck-weed.

But even in this disastrous state she had her wits about her.

She recognised Sligo Downy!

She saw that her nephew had taken

more wine than was good for him, and, in confirmation of her suspicions, she counted the bottles on the table.

“Nephew,” she said, “never mind me; see to your wife. She has had a great fright; help her to her room, and don’t leave her!”

“I have—business with this gentleman, aunt,” faltered Mr. Penrynn.

“Mr. Downy will excuse you, nephew!” said Miss Pris.

At this moment Downy’s fly-man came to the door to say, “There was no time to be lost if the genelman wanted to meet the Express!”

Baffled, defeated, and outwitted, Sligo Downy was obliged to suffer his prey to escape him, and to allow himself to be bowed out by Miss Pris.

This was the more easily managed because old Dorcas came moaning down stairs to call for help—brandy, salts, Miss Pris and Mr. Penrynn—as Mrs. Penrynn, never very

strong, and much shaken by the recent accident, had fainted.

Mr. Penryn at once forgot everything but his darling wife!

Sligo Downy entered the fly alone, and was borne away.

CHAPTER X.

“ Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade,
Death came with trembling care ;
The opening bud to Heaven conveyed,
And bade it blossom there.”

Coleridge.



HE carpenter and undertaker of Pencombe were one and the same person.

His name was Topples, and he had been a Whig, but had veered towards radicalism since the Earl had employed a carpenter from Rockness.

He was very full of the election, and of his firm resolve (let who would be offended —as he said with a wink, and pointing with an inverted thumb to the Castle) to vote for Colonel Turvy.

He talked of “Reform,” the “Ballot,” and “Universal Suffrage,” while Natt Lynn, with tears in his eyes, was ordering the little coffin.

From him Natt Lynn heard that his cottage in the Rocks was not in Pencombe parish, but in that of Rockness.

It was therefore to the Vicar of Rockness that Natt must apply about the burial of the child.

“ You needn’t have no doubts on the matter,” said Topples, beginning to plane and shape a board for the tiny coffin. “ Old Lynn, as wor your uncle, I ’spose, lies in Rockness churchyard, and the babby can lie by him. I made his coffin, and conducted his funeral—so I ought to know. I see him laid there, as snug as ever snug, under the old yew tree; and his brother, your father, I count, said nothing was ever done reasonabler or handsomer, for the money, than that funeral. It’s sheer loss of time for you to go to Pencombe Vicarage,

'cause, if you do, you'll only be told to go on to Rockness. And if you'll take my advice, you'll get the little 'un snug under ground the day after to-morrow. 'Taint weather to keep 'em above ground long—and I'll knock up its coffin at once. The day after to-morrow's Thursday. Then comes Friday; well, I can't attend to business on that day—cos why? it's the nomination day, and I'm busy enough on that day; but I'm at your service Thursday. Grey cloth, and studded with plated nails, and a few ornaments—age and name, in course."

He took up a bit of red chalk to jot down—*so* carelessly on a board close by—those words and figures, that Natt Lynn could scarcely pronounce, the spasm at his throat, and the pang at his heart, choking his utterance.

* * * * *

Natt Lynn soon got over the ground

between Pencombe and Rockness, though it was a six miles walk.

The Vicar was a kind little Divine of the old school—dignified, benevolent, and hospitable.

As he was just sitting down to his luncheon, he pressed Natt to take some refreshment. Natt, who was very faint and weary, gladly accepted the kind offer, and felt all the better for the slices of cold sirloin, the salad and pickled walnuts, the mug of home-brewed ale, and the glass of old port so kindly pressed upon him. After luncheon, Natt went with the Vicar to the churchyard close by, and fixed on the spot where Baby Poll was to lie under the yew tree close to old Lynn, her great-uncle—she one year, two months, and nine days old: he eighty-seven on the day of his death. He had died on his birthday.

The Vicar having fixed the day and hour of the funeral, Natt took his leave, and hurried away, walking very fast in his great

anxiety to return to his poor wife, who, however, was not quite desolate, since Heaven had sent the “child of the wreck” to occupy her thoughts and her time.

CHAPTER XI.

“Lay her in the grave, and from her pure
And unpolluted flesh may violets spring.”

Shakspeare.

HE little grey coffin with the silvered plates and nails arrived at the cottage the next day.

Natt Lynn laid Baby Poll in that last narrow bed, while his wife slept.

In fact before she was up.

When she rose, and saw it there, her tears fell like rain, but the constant attention the little foundling required, prevented her giving herself up to useless, enervating regret.

She was spared what keeps alive so long the prostrating sorrow of many a bereaved mother,—namely, the having nothing to do,

where she had been till then so fully occupied.

She was spared the sight of a vacant cradle, and of tiny baby clothes no longer of any use.

Her hands, as she said, were full; and that is the best thing to prevent the heart's being so.

Still it was a dreadful day to both Natt and Polly Lynn, the day of the funeral.

In most instances the coffin-lid shuts the little one out of the father's heart, and into the mother's for aye.

The grey lid of Baby Poll's coffin shut her into the hearts of both her parents.

Polly never nursed or dressed the little healthy lovely foundling without thinking of Baby Poll and her wasted form.

And Natt Lynn, whether fishing far out at sea, or mending his nets on the sands, or sitting by the fire nursing the foundling while Polly prepared the meals, thought with yearning love and gentle sorrow of

Baby Poll in her little grave by old Mark Lynn's headstone, under the yew tree in Rockness churchyard.

Secretly, as a surprise to his dear wife, Natt Lynn cut from the rock and polished a slab on which he chiselled a cross, and engraved these words, the text having been suggested by the Vicar :

MARY LYNN,

The Beloved Child of Nathaniel Lynn and Mary his Wife,

AGED ONE YEAR, TWO MONTHS, AND
NINE DAYS.

Born May 3rd, 18— ; Died October 12th, 18—.

"And Jesus called a little child."—Matt. xviii. 2.

When this stone was placed on the little grave, the kind and hospitable Vicar took a great interest in the operation, and as for the funeral, refused the fee he might have claimed, and which Natt Lynn humbly proffered.

Natt took Polly and the foundling babe in his own boat to Rockness.

It was a beautiful evening in September, and the slanting rays of the red sun glinted down on Baby Poll's gravestone, and lighted up the cross and the chiselled inscription and text.

That text was a great comfort to the mother, who knelt down and kissed her little one's name, her tears falling fast as she did so.

The Vicar insisted on Natt's bringing his wife and the babe (whom he supposed to be twin-sister of Baby Poll) to tea at the Vicarage.

He noticed the beautiful child, with its large black eyes, its rosebud mouth, its rounded cheeks, and limbs fair and pure as white porcelain, and he played with it, and praised its beauty; but he asked no questions, for fear of renewing its mother's grief.

Often, very often, Natt Lynn, when out fishing alone, would put in at Rockness to visit that little grave and weed the ground around it.

He had planted snowdrops and violets there, and a rose-tree and cypress.

Often too he took his Polly in his boat to see that little grave.

Monarchs and warriors, and great men of all kinds, are often forgotten in their splendid mausoleums and their marble tombs. But Baby Poll was never forgotten, as the state of her little resting-place would prove.

CHAPTER XII.

"How hard it is to hide the sparks of nature."

Shakspeare.

DOLLY LYNN became devotedly attached to the little girl whom Providence seemed to have sent her to supply the place of Baby Poll.

None of their neighbours, "few and far between," and most of them living a good way off, with whom Natt and his young wife became in time acquainted, ever had the slightest suspicion of the fact that the beautiful baby, with its large black eyes, snow-white skin, and delicate little hands and feet, was not really their own child.

Natt Lynn, to whom every kind of con-

cealment and deception was disagreeable, much wished at one time to confide the secret of little Mary's birth to Mr. Melville, the kind Vicar of Rockness, who took a great interest in the lovely child; or to Mr. Trelawny, with whom Natt had become acquainted.

But Polly had such a strong and dreadful fear that, were the truth known, some steps might be taken which would rob her of her darling, and she wept so bitterly, and implored Natt so earnestly, not to make her motherless a second time, that he had not the courage to do, what, she said, would break her heart; and so he kept the secret.

More than once, however, he had said, when looking at the child as it lay in Polly's arms, "Ah, lass, who can tell but what we are wronging that dear babe? No one can look at it and not see it were meant to be a great lady. Them hands ain't shaped for hard work, lass. Who knows but what if we'd told Mr. Trelawny or Mr. Melville

how we comed by it, they might have adwertised or done somehut to find out its parientage. At the best, lass, it must have a hard life of it with us."

"It'll be used to it from the cradle, Natt," said Polly, hugging the child up to her bosom as she spoke ; "and fine ladies ain't half as happy as hardworking gals. So let things be as they be, Natt. If Providence hadn't meant us to have this little one, it wouldn't have been sent into one's very buzzum."

Natt had good reasons besides the high-born air and delicate beauty of the child to believe that it was at least of gentle blood and birth.

When first Polly washed and dressed it, she found, to her surprise, tatooed just below the left breast the letters M. A., surmounted by an earl's coronet, and beneath was a date, April 2, 18—.

She had shown this to Natt, who said that in foreign parts the natives, he heard,

were very fond of tatooing their skins, but why an English baby should be marked thus he could not conceive. "It seems," he said, "almost as if those about her in those outlandish countries had a notion that she'd be lost, and put a mark upon her to prove her hidentification some day. I've a sort of a feeling, lass, that the time will come when we shall know who she really is. By that time, maybe," he added, "thee'll have children enough of thy own, and then it wont break thy heart if baby here should turn out a grand lady, and be taken away from us, to live in some great house, and be called 'my lady.'"

"I don't like to think of it just now, Natt," said Polly, "but time works wonders. At any rate, all she had on, marked M. A., and that gold locket with the same letters on it, and the chain which were round her neck when you found her, are put by in the upper drawer. See, she opens her beautiful black eyes, and smiles

in my face. Oh, Natt, I never can love any baby better than I love this!"

"We shall see, we shall see, lass," said Natt, taking little Mary and dancing her in his arms, the child crowing with delight the while. "Blood's thicker than water, lass, and one's own flesh and blood comes nearer than any other."

Yet he doated on little Mary all the same.

Certainly there was much force in Polly's argument, that Heaven seemed to have sent the lovely little foundling to supply to her full bosom and yearning heart the darling she had lost.

Natt, who doated on his good loving wife, could not bear to grieve her, and yielded to her prayers his own instinctive sense of the duty of telling all to either Mr. Melville or Mr. Trelawny.

He saw the little one grow in health and beauty.

He saw her smile with glee, and heard

her crow with delight when he, on his return home, played bo-peep with her, and he could not see beyond his own happy little home, else might he have beheld a dark cloud gathering over that little one's loved fate, a cloud which a word spoken in due time by him might have dispersed.

We look on the Past as on a map, on which are clearly traced the right and the wrong paths—the rocks, the quicksands, the pitfalls, the perils ; but on the Future we look as on a scene shrouded in a mist, and where one false step may lead Heaven only knows whither.

Natt Lynn took one false step when he consented to conceal the history of the little foundling of the rocks, and to pass off that beautiful little girl as the child of himself and Polly Lynn.

“ Oh ! what a tangled web we weave,
When once we venture to deceive.”

And how often those we love best on earth

are the victims of our weak compliance with their entreaties, and our own shortsighted dread of distressing them.

Natt had many misgivings about the part he had so reluctantly played with regard to little Mary. Could he have looked through the veil that hides the future, he would have been a miserable man.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Oh, woman, in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please :
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou.”

Walter Scott.



VERY great inward change had been wrought in Barbara (Dan Devrill's wife) by the words the Vicar of Pencombe had spoken to her.

That inward change, that change in her very heart, had produced a corresponding one in her temper, her conduct, her life, her conversation, and her manners.

No abuse, no revilings, no threats, no curses, or taunts of her husband's, now elicited any retort or reproach.

Nothing now came from her softened heart and her meek lips but the civil

answer that turneth away wrath—the soothing words of comfort and hope that tallied so well with the gentle helping hands, the watchful care and kind nursing, which astonished the savage Dan, made ten times more ill-tempered by his wound, the confinement it necessitated, and the utter impossibility of getting any spirits or even beer wherewith for a time to drown thought and pain in alcohol, and hush the still small voice of awakening conscience in an ebrious sleep.

Vain were Dan's oaths, threats, and weak, ill-directed blows. Barbara was firm.

She spared no pains to get his wound well; and when she had made it known at "the shop" that Mr. Trelawny, the Vicar, had promised to befriend her, she obtained a few articles on credit, and as she had formerly been very skilful in sick cookery, she fed him with nice dishes which, while he growled at her and cursed them, he de-

voured with an eagerness which convinced her he really relished them.

Owing to this enforced abstinence from heated and exciting liquors, and to Barbara's careful nursing, Dan Devrill got rapidly well.

The wound was healed ; but a hideous scar and a broken nose destroyed what had once been the evil, though somewhat picturesque, beauty of his brigand-like face. Dan Devrill did not feel one particle of gratitude or tenderness towards the wife who had nursed him with such patience and forbearance.

He had begun to associate his wife in his own darkened vindictive mind with the Vicar, whom he looked upon as his greatest enemy, both because he had robbed him of his prize, dashed him like a rabid dog against the rocks, thus destroying the face of which the wretch was proud, and because he had insisted on his (Dan's) quitting the neighbourhood; and the wretch felt that if he

did not promptly obey the order of one whom he felt was master of his destiny, he would probably end his evil career at the hulks, or in penal servitude in prison.

Convinced of this, Dan Devrill resolved to move off with his two elder sons and the fishing-boat—his only ostensible means of earning a livelihood.

He was such a hardened wretch that he did not care at all what became of his wife and the little ones.

He knew what a horror poor Barbara had of the union; but he gruffly said, as he entered the boat with his sons, “Thee’ll be lodged rent free to-night with the cubs. I wish thee joy of thy dry bread and thy water gruel. One good will come of it: all them rat’s tails of thine and the brats will be clipped close in no time, and gratis, too. I’d like to see the queer figgur thee’ll look; a little uglier, but a sight tidier, too.”

Poor Bab’s heart and eyes had been full of tears at parting even with this brute, for

he *was* her husband, and she *had* loved him dearly once, but at this brutal taunt she turned away.

Her thoughts wandered back to the past, and to what her hair had been, and to what she herself *was*, when she had yielded to Dan Devrill's passionate prayers, and to the promptings of her own weak woman-heart, and, in spite of her kind mistress's earnest counsels, had left her good place and married the handsome young fellow of whom she knew so little, and that little not much to his credit!

The boat was gone, and so were the bad drunken husband and the sons who were his counterparts. This was about a week after Mr. Trelawny's visit.

She sat down on a flat piece of rock on the beach and sobbed, as she thought of her desolate, deserted state.

The miserable present, the dark future, the happy long ago, and the grim gates of that cold refuge of the destitute, that

union “where Want herds with Crime, and Sorrow with Despair.”

The children were crying for their breakfast, and their mother sat rocking herself in her restless anguish, and the words, “Oh, Father in Heaven, have mercy upon me,” burst from her very heart. When lo! a gentle hand was laid upon her shoulder, and a kind voice said, “Barbara, thy prayer is heard. He will have mercy upon thee.”

Barbara rose.

There stood the fine majestic form of her master, the Vicar of Pencombe, and with him the deaf gardener, Robin, carrying two large baskets and a bundle!

“I should have been to see you before this, Barbara,” he said, “but I have had much illness and trouble at home to occupy my mind and my time. Now wash and dress yourself and the children. In that bundle and those baskets are clothes and food. When you are all clean

and tidy, and have breakfasted, you shall come with me. I want to take the children to what I call *my* school. And if you like to earn an honest livelihood, by coming daily to the Vicarage to help Dorcas, who is now getting old and feeble, you shall have eighteenpence a day and live rent-free in that little furnished cottage, in which, you may remeinder, my daughter's Daily Governess used to live, when old Dame Blake rented it. It is vacant now, and you may perhaps get a lodger, and, if so, you will be well provided for. You will have the children with you night and morning; but for them I would take you once more into my service as housemaid. I presume your husband and your eldest sons are gone?"

"Yes, sir; they *are* gone, and I hope in a new place they'll lead a new life. Oh, sir, how can I ever repay you?"

"By doing your duty, Barbara, to your God, to your little ones, and to me. And

now be quick, for my time is precious. You can bring away anything you wish to have with you ; Robin can help you to carry any bedding or furniture."

" Alas, sir, I have none ! The cottage is now quite bare. Dan sold what little there was the day before yesterday for liquor. I'd kept him without while he was in bed, but directly he was able to get up he and the lads sold what poor bedding we had, and last night we all slept on the floor!"

CHAPTER XIV.

“ And she so wildly wand’ring there,
The mother in her long despair.”

Campbell.

POOR wretches!” thought the Vicar.
“ In my own intense anxiety I
had forgotten their distress.”

The fact was, Minna had been through
the past week very dangerously ill.

On waking after a very long and deep
sleep, caused by the sedative, her grief and
despair at the loss of her child were so great
that brain fever ensued.

In her ravings she accused her husband
of having induced the storm-fiend to send
the winds and waves to destroy her child.
“ If the little corpse is cast on shore,” she

would say (sitting up in bed and looking wildly round), "you will know it by the letters M. A., and a coronet, and the date of its birth tatooed under its left breast. Lolah, its silly ayah, without my knowledge consulted an Indian seer about its destiny. He cast the babe's horoscope, and said that when a year old it would be lost, and advised that, in order to identify it in after-life, it should be tatooed thus. Lolah got him to do it then and there. She did not dare ask me ; she knew I should not consent, so she never told me until it was done. Poor Lolah ! I saw her sink ; I saw her dark face under the waters. Oh, save the child ! You will know her by those letters and that coronet. Bring her to me, I will warm her back to life."

Mr. Trelawny, afraid to employ the nearest doctor, who lived at Rockness, went to Bodmin, and brought over the best physician there, in a fly. Bodmin was so far off that Mr. Trelawny did not fear (as

he did in the case of the medical man from Rockness) that the abode of a strange lady at the Vicarage would be reported and commented on.

Of old Dorcas's discretion and fidelity he was quite certain, and as yet the secret of Minna's return was known only to her. He had resolved that even Robin should be kept in the dark.

"Barbara of course must know it," he said to himself, when once she was installed there; but both Dorcas and her master felt certain she would keep their secret.

Dr. Deering, the Bodmin physician, treated the unhappy Minna judiciously, and in a few days she was out of danger, but for a long time she required constant watching and nursing.

Poor Dorcas, though her will was strong, was too old and feeble for so much extra fatigue.

Barbara, then, bound by every tie of gratitude to the Vicar, and having nursed

Minna in her infancy, was a safe and valuable addition to the little household.

It was ultimately decided that, in case anyone should, by accident, discover, or even suspect, that a stranger was staying at the Vicarage, the fact of her being Mr. Trellawny's daughter should be carefully concealed.

Minna was to pass for a niece of Dorcas's, who, coming to help her aunt in her declining years and strength, had been taken ill with brain fever, and was still confined to the house.

The Vicar, however—who, like Natt Lynn, hated all disguises and deceptions—only consented to this as a last resource.

He implored the two women, Dorcas and Barbara, to be so careful and discreet that no misrepresentation or equivocation need be resorted to.

Pencombe was so remote and lonely a place, and so thinly inhabited, that it was

not very likely Minna's presence at the Vicarage would be discovered.

She had been so constantly away for two years before her elopement, that no one wondered at her continued absence.

Still, as Jasper Ardennes *was* known to be in England, and had been at Pencombe during the election, Mr. Trelawny felt the full importance to his hapless child of concealing her abode.

Many things poor Minna had revealed in her delirium convincing him that Jasper Ardennes was not a man to stop at any crime where his own passions and interests were concerned.

Barbara's cottage was as snug, as comfortable, and as neatly furnished, as the hovel in the rocks had been bare and wretched.

Her children were now well clothed, well fed, and well taught.

She herself was a new creature. A neat cap covered what remained of her once fine hair, and beneath the nicely-fluted borders

two glossy bands of chestnut hair were braided over a calm, happy brow, no longer wrinkled with care and intersected with lines of sorrow's tracing.

Something of her former roundness and bloom had returned to her face. She was no longer what her savage husband had been wont to call her—"A Death's-head on a mopstick."

She was a nice, clean, pleasant-looking, woman, pious, grateful, and devoted; and she often told Dorcas that if she could but know that Dan and the lads were getting on better, she should feel as if she was in Heaven.

Her woman-heart still clung to that worthless husband and those thankless sons!

Not that she did not shudder at the thought of ever seeing Dan again, but she longed to know that he and the boys were not in want, and were leading a better life!

CHAPTER XV.

" She, too, would bring to her husband's house delight and abundance ;
Filling it full of love and the ruddy faces of children."

Longfellow.

IME passed on, and brought with it its customary chances and changes.

The good had grown better, and the bad, in most instances, worse.

Boys and girls had become young men and women.

The middle-aged had become elderly ; the elderly had grown old.

The old had, in many instances, been borne to their last homes.

Polly Lynn was now the happy mother of four chubby, ruddy, healthy little ones ; and Mary, tall and thoughtful beyond her years, was a great help and a little mother to them.

Rosy, the eldest of Polly's own children, was two years younger than Mary.

She was a perfect cherub, with bright blue eyes, golden hair, rosy cheeks, and lovely dimples, and a strong contrast to Mary, whose full brow (shaded with a profusion of glossy black hair), large dark eyes and long jetty lashes, made her pallor, and the thinness of her face, the more remarkable.

Rosy was very fat.

Mary was very tall for her age, and very slender.

The children, under the care of Mary, were a good deal on the beach.

They were always so clean and tidy, and were such rosy, lovely children, that they were a good deal noticed by Mr. Trelawny,

and Mr. Penryn and his son Paul, who often went out fishing with Natt Lynn in the boat of the latter.

Mr. Penryn was a widower now.

His wife had died in giving birth to a still-born infant, and his aunt, Miss Priscilla, had died soon after, at the age of eighty.

These were in every way heavy losses for him.

They would have been such to any man; but Mr. Penryn, so amiable, and, alas! so weak, lost in his wife and his aunt two high-principled, strong-minded women, always at hand to keep evil influences at bay, and as he could not say "No," to say it for him, and always in the right place.

His son Paul, now tall and manly, and educated by his father—for Mr. Penryn was a fine scholar—was a youth of noble promise.

He had inherited the great power of acquiring knowledge of his father, and

the brave spirit and firm nature of his mother!

Paul often talked with Natt's little family on the beach.

He was very fond of calling at the fisherman's cottage.

He had been very much struck with the brilliant beauty of Rosy, then a wild romp of ten years old; but when he came to know the little family better, and had studied them more (for Paul had a great turn for reflection and comparison), he became more interested in the much more singular and elevated character of Mary Lynn, whom he looked upon as the eldest of Natt's and Polly's children.

Mary had learnt to read with very little trouble. No one knew exactly how.

She was, in fact, almost self-taught; except that the Vicar of Rockness had given her in her infancy a box of ivory letters and Mavor's spelling-book, and

had given her a lesson whenever he met her on the beach with her book in her hand.

Polly would have sent little Mary to school but that she really could not spare her.

Mary had such a good head, such a sweet temper, and such helping hands !

Mary Lynn had not the robust health and strength of the other children.

Rory, three years younger, could carry weights easily which soon wearied Mary, but then Polly had taught Mary to sew, and Mary was very fond of her needle, and very quick and clever at it !

How cleverly those little white taper fingers darned Daddy Natt's great grey worsted stockings, and patched his fustian jacket and corduroys, and made and mended the children's frocks and pinafores, it was a sight to see ; and so smiling and patient was the sweet girl, working steadily on while the others played on the beach ; her

great delight if, her work over, Polly would let her read “The Pilgrim’s Progress”—a large, quaint old copy with the original cuts—and a very old copy of “Paul and Virginia,” and the “Vicar of Wakefield;” bound up together.

Paul Penry (at this time a tall, manly boy) patronized the book-loving Mary, and taught her to write and cypher.

Mary thought that the Paul in the book she loved, must have been very like Master Penry.

As she was very fond of collecting and drying seaweed, Paul taught her how to form it in the shape of a beautiful bouquet gummed on white paper or cardboard.

He would go with Rosy and the other children in search of the seaweed and shells for Mary, and his father and Mr. Trelawny were so struck with the taste and skill these works displayed that they gave Mary a shilling apiece for them, and ordered another each, to make a pair.

On what trifling things does a human destiny seem sometimes to turn !

Mary Lynn's was in a manner decided by her seaweed fancy works,—at least to mortal eyes it seemed so—but Providence of course overrules all.

The Countess of Altamount, whom we saw at the election, had been dead some years.

The Earl had married again, and had two little girls.

One day he came down on the beach with these children and their governess.

He wanted, as it was very fine and calm, to take them a sail in Natt Lynn's boat.

Mary Lynn was busy at her seaweed pictures.

Paul was advising and directing her.

Beautiful Rosy and the other children were hindering under the pretence of helping !

The Earl admired the seaweed bouquet.

He admired the young artist still more.

She was so uncommon looking a girl for a fisherman's daughter!

She reminded him of some young Madonna he had seen in a Spanish church abroad.

The governess, Miss Osgood, greatly admired the seaweed pictures—so did the little Ladies Beatrice and Florence.

The result was that Mary was to go up to the castle to spend a day—and to teach the Earl's daughters how to prepare and dry the seaweed, and how to dispose and group it as Paul Penrynn had taught her to do.

It was on that very evening that Barbara Devrill, having given her now big boys their supper, and seen them to bed, was counting over a sum of money which she had hoarded up for the purpose of apprenticing her eldest boy at home.

She had just replaced the stocking, in which it was tied up, in a hole in the wall,

behind a coloured print of “The Prodigal Son,” when she thought she heard a tap at the window, and, turning round with a beating heart, she saw glaring in upon her the fierce eyes of her husband, Dan Devrill, whom she had not seen or heard of for so many years!

CHAPTER XVI.

“ Not much he loved long question of the past.”

Lara.

 T was with mixed feelings that Barbara recognised the broken nose, cruel eyes, and weather-beaten, unshaven face which had once been good-looking enough to win her weak woman-heart, and to obtain for its owner the name of Handsome Dan!

She was glad he was yet alive—but she would rather have learnt that fact from anyone than himself!

The expression in his face was one which she well knew, and of which she was much afraid.

It was an expression always there, when money was his object, and when he was

resolved to obtain it, no matter by what means!

She had uttered a faint scream, and had turned deadly pale.

"Come and open the door, can't thee, ye jade!" he said; "or wouldest rather I smashed in the window. Its no odds to I, if it bean't none to thee!"

Trembling and tearful, Barbara opened the door!

"Well, thee be a kind, warm-hearted wife!" he said; "thee do make a chap feel welcome home again after so many years in furrin parts. Thee do, and no mistake!"

"I'm glad to see thou'rt alive and well, Dan," said the poor wife.

"Be'st thee? I'd never ha' guessed it, to see thy white figgurhead,—but no matter, welcome or not, I'm thy lord and master; what's thy home is my home, and what's thy property is my property. Give me somehut to drink!"

“I have nothing but milk or water; but I’ll soon make thee a good cup of tea or coffee.”

“Thank thee for nothin’. I’m no milk-sop or water rat, or teetotaller, and my time’s short. There’s may be them on the look-out for I, as might think to find me here; so quick, give me the money I saw thee countin’ out just now! And be quick about it, d’ye hear. Why thou’st had the best of it since we parted, there’s flesh on thy bones and colour in thy cheeks. If the storm that threatens I blows over, I’ll maybe come and settle down here with thee a’ter all. Come, give us the blunt, I must be off!”

“Oh, Dan, it’s what I’ve saved to prentice Tom.”

“Ah, that reminds me that Tom must be a soizeable chap by this time, and might be useful in the boat. Where is he?”

“Oh, don’t take Tom from me,” cried

the poor mother, “ don’t ! How’s Dan and Bob, and what’s they doing ? ”

“ Whatever suits ’em ; they’re fine fellers, both on um, the moral of I, and treading in my steps, and they can’t do better. But hark ye, if I let ye off taking Tom this time, hand me the blunt, this instant moment, and any more thou’st got. I can’t stay now, I’m uncommon afeard I might be tracked here, but I’m prepared.”

He drew a knife from his belt, and sharpened it on the hearthstone.

“ Now, quick, tell me how thee contrives to earn money to prentice lads, and live on the fat o’ the land ? ”

“ I’m in the Vicar’s service,” said Barbara, “ and so is Tom.”

“ The Vicar ! ” cried Dan, with a hideous oath, “ that reminds me that I owes him one ! and I’ll pay it some day with interest too ! He spoilt my beauty for me, and I’ll return the compliment. I wants to know what he done with the young ’ooman and

her jewels,—she as wor wrecked on Dead Man's Pint when the *Golden Bengal* went down. Why it wor only because I, thinking she wor stark dead, wor a going to help myself to her ear-rings and necklace, that he, the great strong brute, took I by the throat, and dashed I against the rocks as if I'd been a dog; and here's his mark! Well, now it's come into my head that she wor no other nor Miss Trelawny, as I helped to run off with the Hon. Mr. Jasper Ardennes. It would be worth a good round sum to I to find out what's become of she, if so be she wor the Vicar's daughter. Cos vy? I've met him, but in forrin parts, and he's married again!"

"Married again!" said Barbara, aghast.

"Yes, to be sure, small shame to him, if any! Why she ran away from him and carried off the babby and embarked under a *alias*, and the marriage wor a secret one. No one knowd it but you and I, and their two selves. And she wor bound over to

keep it dark while the Earl lives. Master Jasper in course found out that she went off in the *Golden Bengal*, and didn't shed no tears when he heard o' the wreck o' that 'ere noble steamer, but when I met him spliced again, I told him I warn't sure his first wife had gone to the bottom. Lor, he turned as white as a curd, but wouldn't believe it, and flew in a rage, for he've got three brats by his present partner, one o' them a very fine boy, and as Lord Derwent's turned off sickly, and aint like to live, why that child o' Mr. Jasper's, if he wor but Jasper's lawful son, would one day be a Earl, but if Jasper, you see, have married the boy's mother while his first wife's alive, that makes her, for all her pride,—and she be a stuck-up and no mistake,—only his missus, and the children nothing to count upon, not being even legitimate. Now, if I'm right in my conjecturations, and if I've hit the right nail on the head, I've got a good game in my

hand when I've time to play it out. Why, if his first wife *wor* saved from the wreck, and *do* live, I don't think he'd stand at five thousand pound, if I named that sum, to keep the secret, and get her quietly out of the way. And then you, Bab, should have a better home than this, and silk gounds and a one'-oss shay, all bought with——”

“With blood-money,” gasped Barbara. “I'd rather starve, Dan! and so I tell you. And, mind me! you shall never harm the Vicar, nor any one that's kith or kin to him, while I've a tongue in my head and breath in my body! I've kept your dreadful secrets close till now; but if you'd be villain enough to make away with Miss Minna that was, and that for blood-money given to you by her husband, I'd peach, ay, if you come to swing for it!”

“I don't question thee wouldst,” said Dan, with an evil glitter in his eye; “but there's nothing for thee to peach about, and never wont be. Why, thee must be a soft-

head not to see I was only chaffing. Is this all thee'st got by thee?"

"Ah!" sobbed Barbara, "why you left me without a halfpenny. It's a wonder I've got that much."

"Why if thee's turned teetotaller and Methody, and all manner, in course they've made it worth thy while. Well, next time I comes this way I shall take Tom and Sam with me; we wants hands."

At this moment a whistle was heard.

"That's Dan's whistle; it warns me that I must be off. If thee don't see me again soon, ye may reckon that I'm gone to Davy's locker. So, good-bye! Thee've picked up wonderful! I shouldn't be ashamed to own thee now; thou'rt worth twenty of the half-starved Death's-head on a mopstick thee was when I left thee!"

A second whistle had sounded shrilly.

Dan rushed off; and Barbara, looking after his retreating form in the moonlight, prayed that he might be kept from fresh

crime and peril, and that it might be very long ere she beheld him again!

Fortunately, the greater part of her savings she had, by the Vicar's advice, put into the Penzance Savings Bank.

She resolved as soon as possible to get both Tom and Sam apprenticed, or placed out at some distance, so that if their dreadful father did come back with the intention of taking them away to make wreckers or robbers of them, he should not be able to discover their abode.

She began to wish herself away from a place where she could never again feel safe from this bad man; and as the Vicar *had* proposed to her to live at the Vicarage again as soon as the boys were placed out, she determined in her own mind to do so.

CHAPTER XVII.

“Grief fills the room up of my absent child.”

King John.

INNA had risen from the bed to which brain fever and a long subsequent illness had confined her, but she had never recovered her health or spirits.

The loss of her child was ever present to her mind; and the once lovely, blooming, high-spirited girl had become a pale, pensive, melancholy woman.

Fortunately for her, the seeds of early piety which her father had sown in her heart grew up and flourished, when watered night and day by tears.

It is ever thus—watered by such showers those seeds always bring forth a rich crop of holy thoughts and good works.

Minna, always dressed in deep mourning and wearing a double black crape veil, through which no one could distinguish her features, went to church daily, unseen by any one—for the Vicarage gardens joined the churchyard.

She always entered the church half an hour before the rest of the congregation, and remained till they were all gone.

The Vicarage pew was in the chancel, surrounded by oaken panelling of a considerable height, above which were crimson curtains drawn along brass rods.

In a dark corner of this secluded pew, Minna could sit or stand, or kneel, unseen by any one!

A door in the chancel opened into the churchyard, within a few feet of a small postern gate in the wall of the Vicarage garden. Owing to this gate, her incomings and outgoings were easily and privately managed.

She spent her time in reading, praying,

working for the poor, and wandering at very early morn or “dewy eve” along the beach or among the rocks.

The few people who knew of her presence believed her to be Mistress Dorcas’s niece.

A young widow, who had lost her only child.

She always avoided coming in contact with any one ; but she was very fond of the company of Natt Lynn’s children, whom she often met on the beach or among the rocks.

She would fill a basket with cakes and fruit, in the hopes of meeting with them ; and when she met with them she would sit down in some sheltered remote nook on the beach, and read to them or tell them stories, or sing to them in the sweetest of voices quaint old ballads, like “The Babes in the Wood !”

Paul Penryn would often join the little group, who were always on the look-out for “the veiled lady ;” and Paul delighted in

her readings, her tales, and her ballads as much as the little Lynns did.

Towards Mary Lynn, “the veiled lady” felt her heart warmed and drawn in a manner for which she vainly tried to account, even by the sweetness, the intelligence, and the strong early piety of this remarkable child.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Night on the waves, and the moon is on high,
Hung like a gem on the brow of the sky."

T. K. Hervey.

NE lovely moonlit night, Minna, "the veiled woman," had wandered farther than her wont among the rocks.

She had strayed out in the hope of meeting Natt Lynn's children, who, with Paul Penryn, had gone in Natt's boat to Rockness on a pilgrimage to the grave of "Baby Poll."

Minna hoped to meet them there, and intended to return with them in the boat as far as "Dead Man's Point."

Minna thought she was perfectly acquainted with all the narrow, tortuous, up-

hill paths among the rocks between Pencombe and Rockness, but plunged in a reverie, and in passionate musings on the past, Minna missed her way, and to her horror and dismay she found that every step she took seemed to lead her into stranger and wilder scenes.

The sun had gone down in a flood of glory, and the moon had risen round and fair, and was flooding with silver the dark azure of the sea, giving, in her queen-like bounty, a silver token to each trembling, quivering ripple that bowed courtier-like before her.

“How shall I find my way back?” said Minna to herself; “and what anxiety and terror will my dear father and old Dorcas feel if I am not home before dark?”

As she thought thus, she approached a cave, which, in olden times, had been the haunt of a desperate gang of smugglers. Natural arches of rock opened upon the beach, but the smugglers had excavated or

hollowed out of the rocks a number of cellars, the last of which communicated with the open country, and had enabled the captain of a band of desperate smugglers to escape. At last, however, this desperado had, by the resolute courage of the coast-guard, been surrounded in his cave, and seeing that there was no hope of escape, had shot himself in the innermost recess of this rocky fortress.

Of course the superstitious Cornish fishermen, averred that Captain Bolt's ghost haunted the spot where he had died, and even Minna, alone in that remote spot by moonlight, shuddered when she found herself at the entrance of the Smuggler's Cave.

Minna stood for a time under the rugged arches, gazing with a poet's and an artist's rapture at the beautiful scene before her.

She sate down for a moment on a slab of rock, on which tradition said that blood had

been shed, in confirmation of which several dark-brown stains appeared.

As Minna, robed in black, rested under the arch of the cave, she suddenly perceived a small dark boat—a fisherman's boat—making, as it seemed to her, for the Smuggler's Cave; and on the white moon-lit sands she beheld a tall figure, wrapt in a military cloak, hurrying towards the same spot.

There was something in the walk, the air, the height of that tall, dark-shrouded form, which sent the hot blood from Minna's heart to her pale brow. A feeling of dread, of horror, of wild alarm seized upon her.

An instinct of self-preservation made her withdraw from the archway into an inner recess of the Smuggler's Cave.

As she did so she heard steps approach the entrance, and a shrill whistle from the shore was answered by one shriller still from the sea.

The next moment she became aware that a boat was being moored close by, and soon the sound of the tread of some heavy feet was contrasted with the short, sharp, military step of the first comer.

An agonizing dread of being discovered contended now in Minna's breast with a burning anxiety to know whether her terrible fears were well founded.

The latter triumphed sufficiently to induce her to look through a grated hole in the first inner cave, and then all hope, all doubt were lost in the terrible conviction that the two men, evidently meeting by appointment in the Smuggler's Cave, were Jasper Ardennes, her husband, and the fisherman who had helped her to elope with him, and to whose evil aid, all her miseries, her sin, her shame, and her long despair were owing.

Yes, Minna saw only the profile and the tall form, both shrouded and in the shade,

of Jasper Ardennes, but she felt by the chill at her heart that it was he !

On Dan Devrill's vicious countenance, on the contrary, the moon shone, and Minna, who had heard from old Dorcas of the part he had played when the *Golden Bengal* was wrecked, and she was cast ashore, felt that were her presence discovered, and were Jasper to say to Dan Devrill, “Kill that woman on the spot!” that her life would not be worth a moment's purchase.

Minna felt this, and at first a deadly faintness came over her ; but yet she remained where she was, clinging to the iron bars of the grating, and her dark-robed, slender form—luckily in the deep shadow of the rock—leaning against the wall of the first inner cavern.

“Now, Devrill, be brief, for I have no time to waste. I am here in answer to your summons. Don't hang fire, man ; what have you to tell me ?”

“What your honour wouldn’t believe when I told you in Ingee.”

“Confound it, what do you mean?” groaned Jasper Ardennes.

“I mean that *she* lives. *She* did *not* go to the bottom in the *Golden Bengal*. I guessed so when I saw your honour in Calcuttia. I knows it now.”

“Hang me if I believe a word of it,” said the Honourable Jasper Ardennes. “I know you, Dan Devrill, and I believe it’s a cock-and-bull story, trumped up to terrify me for purposes of your own!”

He took out an elegant little fusee-case, struck a match, and lighted his cigar.

His back was to the trembling Minna, who still clung to the rusty bars. Luckily she wore black kid gloves, and a double crape veil over her face, else the light of the fusee would have flashed on features as white as marble, and on slender fingers of the same hue.

Dan, who was of the free-and-easy school,

and with whom companionship in crime had engendered a sort of equality, took out a short clay pipe and begged a fusee of his Honourable partner in iniquity, who had not presence of mind to refuse, or to express the surprise and scorn such audacity awakened in his aristocratic nature.

By the blazing light of that second fusee Minna distinctly saw the broken nose, the scar, and the cruel, crafty eyes and shaggy hair and beard of Dan Devrill.

After smoking in silence for a few minutes, Dan said—

“ Seeing’s believing, your honour. I’ve a plan in my head for letting you see with your own eyes that what I tells you is true.”

“ Come into the inner cave,” said Jasper Ardennes. “ I see a boat making for this place; it seems to me to be Natt Lynn’s.”

“ Ay, confound him,” said Dan, with an oath; “ he’d better not cross my path, or

I'll cook his goose for him! He is making for this cave, and be hanged to him!"

Jasper Ardennes rose, and followed by Dan Devrill, entered the inner cave.

He passed so close to the half paralysed Minna, that his military cloak brushed her side, and the scent of patchouli—a scent he always wore—and which, as associated with him, had a deadly influence over her, filled the air.

The two men, however, whose "consciences made cowards" of them both, hurried into the innermost and tortuous recesses of the rock, where there was an opening communicating with the country.

Meanwhile, Natt Lynn, with Mary, Rosy, and Paul Penry in his boat, stopped for a few minutes at the Smuggler's Cave.

The hope of rescue gave Minna strength to stagger from her place of concealment into the outer cavern.

And as she did so, Paul Penry exclaimed, "The Veiled Lady!" and ex-

tending his arms, caught her in time to prevent her falling lifeless to the ground.

“She’ve had a fright of some kind, poor dear!” said Natt, as Mary and Rosy hastened to loosen Minna’s dress, untie her bonnet, and dash some sea-water in her face.

She opened her eyes and said—

“Take me away! take me away! I cannot breathe here! They are at hand—they will kill me!”

“She’ve seen somehut or other as has turned her nerves,” said Natt Lynn. “The best we can do is to get her into the boat and away from this haunted hole.”

“Yes, yes! Take me away—take me home!” sighed Minna.

Natt Lynn and young Paul lifted her into the boat. She lay in the bottom with her head on Mary’s knee, and Rosy and Paul in close attendance on her.

Ere long she was safe at home; but for more than an hour Jasper Ardennes and

Dan Devrill, who had heard nothing of what had passed in the archway of the cavern, remained in close and evil consultation. And then, Dan Devrill having cautiously reconnoitred the archway and the moonlit sea, from that same grated slit from which Minna had watched her husband and the wrecker, satisfied that all was safe, Jasper Ardennes and his vile confederate entered the boat of the latter.

Jasper landed at a rough sort of half-ruined pier on the Altamount estate.

"Then your honour wont object to scale the Wicarage wall, jist to take a squint into the lady's room. I've done it myself not many nights sinst, and as plain as ever I zeed her in my life, I zeed one as shall be nameless, but who do own a great name for all that, a lying in the wery same bed she lay in, the night afore she took French leave of her stiff-necked, long-legged, stuck-up parson of a dad!"

Jasper Ardennes scowled at Dan Devrill;

he did not like to hear that low villain speaking thus disrespectfully of one who was, after all, the lawful father-in-law of his own high-born honourable self.

“Seeing’s believing, your honour, as I said afore,” sulkily resumed Dan. “But you can please yourself—’taint no petikelar business of mine, nor no great odds to I one way or t’other. So just say yes or no, that I may be in the way, and have the gate open and the steps handy—as I done afore when your honour risked a broken neck to lay a bit o’ a letter, or a ring, or a pair o’ ear-drops, on Miss Minna’s table.”

“Have everything in readiness, Dan. As you say, seeing’s believing, and nothing short of seeing her with my own eyes shall ever convince me that she did not go down in the *Golden Bengal*. I’ve always looked on your yarn, Dan, as spun by you to serve your own purpose. I’m obliged to go up to town to-morrow, on business of importance, to my Jasper—my boy. He’s

had a cough lately, and has looked pale and thin, and I mean to have a consultation about him. If, as I hope and trust, it proves to be nothing but a cold, I shall be back here by the end of the week, and then I'll scale the old wall, as I did when Love made it seem such a delightful task—fool that I was!"

"And if you sees *her*, your honour, with your own eyes, a lying in her own bed—the same fine face and noble figgurhead as ever, only white as alabasker, and a good bit wasted—what will you say then?"

The wretch fixed his eyes on Jasper Ardennes as he spoke, and there was in their cruel and crafty expression something that made the latter shudder.

"You see, yer honour," said Dan, "she may only be waiting till my lord your father's gone, and if she proves her marriage, what becomes of your honoured lady and Master Jasper? They wont count for much in that case!"

“That must never be!” groaned Jasper Ardennes. “Yet I will not—cannot! No! I have it, Dan! At Antwerp there is a private madhouse, kept by a man who is in my power, and who owes me everything. I have no doubt Minna would do as you suggest, as soon as the Earl, my father, is in the family vault. If indeed she *was* saved from the wreck, I care not so much that she has it in her power to make my haughty wife nothing, or worse than nothing, as that she can rob the only thing that loves me dearly, and that I dearly love, of the very name to which he adds fresh honour. If she really lives——”

He bent his head till his lips almost touched Dan’s ear, and whispered a few words to the effect that a large reward should be Dan’s if he contrived to lodge Minna safely at the madhouse in question.

“Once there,” said Jasper Ardennes, “she is there for life! I do not believe

she lives, but if she does, will you undertake this?"

" Depend on me, your honour," growled Dan. " I've done your bidding hitherto, and so I will while there's a heart in this buzzum!"

The two then parted.

CHAPTER XIX.

“A nameless terror seems to haunt me here!
I start, grow cold, and cannot choose but fear.”

Lascelles.

HE great terror Minna had felt in the Smuggler’s Cave, added to the conviction that her husband and Dan Devrill were in league together, made her afraid to venture out, as she had hitherto done, to meet Natt’s children and Paul Penryn on the beach.

Barbara, however, had met with Mary and Rosy, and had heard of and reported to Minna the news of Mary Lynn’s meeting with the Earl, and of her approaching visit to Altamount Castle.

Minna felt a deep interest in all things

that concerned Mary Lynn, and it was not without feelings of anxiety that she heard of the visit to the beach, paid by the Earl of Altamount, his two little girls, Lady Beatrice and Lady Florence, and of Mary Lynn's being invited to the Castle to spend a day there, in order to teach the little ladies to make seaweed pictures.

"Mary Lynn," said Minna to herself, "is now fifteen, and very womanly for her years. To the eye of the many she is not so beautiful as that bright young Hebe, her sister Rose; but what man of taste would not acknowledge that Mary's large dark eyes, so full of soul, her fine brow, her perfect features, and her muse-like form, are the type of all that is most intellectual, passionate, and lofty in woman—and being what she is, and with a heart that has 'far outgrown her years,' is it not a perilous thing for her to go where captivating, elegant, and heartless men abound?"

Oh, that I could save her from the danger of meeting such men."

Paul Penryn, too, who took a great interest and pride in his young pupil, Mary Lynn, was very anxious for the day she was to spend at the Castle to come and go.

He wanted to hear all the particulars of that visit, and he wanted, too, to ascertain that Mary's head was not turned by the great notice taken of her—and by having spent a day at a Castle, and been chosen as a sort of companion by an Earl's daughters.

His curiosity was not destined to be gratified as speedily as he had expected.

It was Miss Osgood, the governess at the Castle, who had called at Natt Lynn's cottage to request them to spare Mary to spend a day at the Castle. It was the same excellent and very odd-looking, middle-aged spinster who drove herself down in a pony-chaise to the beach, and to Natt

Lynn's, to ask Polly Lynn to allow her eldest daughter to prolong her stay for some days.

Polly missed Mary's helping hands very much, but she did not like to refuse my lord and my lady, for they were excellent customers for Natt's fish—and the Earl paid him handsomely when he or any friends staying with him went out in Natt's boat for a day's fishing.

Miss Osgood had long black eyes peering through green spectacles, a very long nose, a very long upper lip, very long teeth, and very long, thin, grey ringlets. She was very tall, high-shouldered, short-waisted, and spare.

Miss Osgood had educated the Earl's eldest daughters, who had married well, and she had still on her hands his two younger girls by his first wife, Lady Mildred and Lady Julia, and the two little girls by his second wife, Ladies Beatrice and Florence. There could not be a more

estimable or a less lovely woman than Miss Osgood.

She had great influence at the Castle, and she had taken a fancy to “Mary Lynn.”

She had been for some time, with the sanction of the Earl and the Countess, looking out for some young girl to help her in the schoolroom with the education of the two little ladies, who were so young as only to require the rudiments of learning, and to a finishing governess like Miss Osgood the teaching young children to read, was very wearisome.

Miss Osgood saw at a glance how very useful Mary Lynn—so patient, so good tempered, and such a favourite with the little girls—would be at the Castle.

Gazing at the delicate complexion, the white, taper fingers and dainty limbs of Mary, it struck her how very unfit she was for the hard work, hard fare, and exposure to the elements of a fisherman’s daughter,

and in time a fisherman's wife, and how much better it would be for herself and her family that she should be brought up as a governess.

Miss Osgood, therefore, undertook to sound Polly Lynn, and obtained her consent to Mary's at any rate remaining for a time at the castle.

CHAPTER XX.

“Gone from her cheek was its summer bloom,
And her lip had lost all its sweet perfume,
And the gloss had dropt from her raven hair,
And her cheek was pale but no longer fair.”

Barry Cornwall.

MINNA, who, for reasons of her own, had not confided to her father the cause of her increased nervousness, looked so much paler and weaker after her alarm in the Smuggler’s Cave, that Mr. Trelawny again summoned Dr. Deering to Pencombe.

The Doctor, who took a great interest in his lovely patient, although he only looked upon her as Dorcas’s niece, strongly advised that she should leave the bedroom in which he had hitherto seen her, for an adjoining room with a southern aspect.

Minna had a cough, and Dr. Deering attached great importance to a southern aspect.

He also, noticing the great nervous trepidation of Minna, advised that some watchful, experienced person should sleep in the room which had hitherto been Minna's, in order to be close at hand to attend to her during the night.

As by this time Barbara had succeeded, with the Vicar's help, in getting one of her boys apprenticed at Exeter, and as Sam, the other, had been taken into the Vicarage to be trained to wait at table and become a sort of foot-boy or page, she was at liberty to devote her nights to the care of Minna.

Her cottage, by her own desire, was let to an old lady who had seen better days, the widow of a curate, who, by taking a quiet lodger or two, hoped to make a livelihood, and Barbara once more became an inmate of Pencombe Vicarage.

Nothing could exceed her devotion to

her young mistress, the unfortunate Minna. Even Dorcas, with all her love and care, her intense anxiety, and her almost maternal tenderness, was content to see Barbara installed in what had always been her young missis's room, to attend to her during the night.

Dorcas, neither hearing nor seeing as well as she had formerly done, felt that Barbara was much fitter to nurse Minna than herself.

Minna did not like to quit the apartment endeared to her by so many happy memories; but her father had said she was to settle herself in the south room by Dr. Deering's express orders, and Minna's old dread of her father prompted an obedience as unquestioning and as implicit as he had been wont to exact in her childhood and early youth.

And so the pretty little room, with its balcony full of flowers, and the outer wall of which was festooned by a fine old vine,

whose leaves, tendrils, and amethystine clusters of grapes formed a framework to the old-fashioned casement, was vacated by Minna, and much regretted by her, although the south room was also the best or visitor's room.

Instead of the little French bedstead draped with white muslin and pink silk, the bed in which Minna had slept in her girlhood, the south room boasted a large four-poster, with huge mahogany pillars black with time, and thick damask silk curtains of gold colour. The windows looking on the lawn and front gate, had hangings to match, while in Minna's virgin bower the quaint old window looked only on an old-fashioned fruit and flower-garden, beehives, and a sun-dial.

* * * * *

It was two o'clock in the morning.

Minna had already passed two nights in the south room, and Barbara, who had

been in attendance on her till one o'clock, A.M., for Minna had been unusually nervous and restless, had got into bed at last, but had a night-light burning on the table by her bedside, to enable her at any moment to rise and hasten to her lady's assistance.

Barbara, who, with so bad a husband as Dan lurking, for aught she knew, in the neighbourhood, could not feel very easy in her mind by day, no sooner fell asleep than painful dreams of Dan's evil-doings haunted her sleep.

She dreamt that she was rushing across a wild common at night to try to escape from him, and that she heard him behind her cursing her and threatening her life, and at last that, coming suddenly on a dark-flowing river, and feeling his breath on her cheek and his hand on her shoulder, she plunged in, and in the agonies of drowning she woke, and, sitting up in bed, damp, cold, and shaking with terror, she

saw two men, whose faces were covered with black crape, looking into the room, having opened the window from the outside.

Barbara had wonderful presence of mind. She knew that, were she to scream, these wretches—of whom she half suspected the identity and the purpose—would probably murder her at once, and then enter Minna's room, perhaps to take her life, perhaps to carry her off.

She therefore pretended to yawn and to stretch herself; she rubbed her eyes, and then she beat up her pillow as if about to compose herself to sleep again.

Then, swift as thought, while the two men at the window crouched down, hoping to escape her notice—she sprang out of bed, caught up her lamp, rushed into Minna's room, and locked the door.

The south room had another door which opened on the landing, just opposite the Vicar's own room.

Without awaking Minna, Barbara reached the Vicar's room and succeeded in arousing him.

He kept a pair of loaded pistols over the fireplace; and though he suspected that Barbara had mistaken a dream for a reality, he threw on his dressing-gown, and, taking his pistols with him, stepped noiselessly upstairs into the unoccupied attic, just above what was called Miss Trelawny's room.

Very softly he opened the window.

The wind was rustling the vine leaves, but yet he thought he heard something whispering.

He was right, for at that moment the Hon. Jasper Ardennes was saying to Dan Devrill—

“What a confounded fool you are, Dan, to have mistaken a middle-aged housemaid for——”

“I can't make it out no ways, your honour,” returned Dan; “but blow me if

the last time I looked in at this winder, I didn't see Miss Minner, as was, asleep in that wery bed."

"Well," said Jasper, "you can't expect me to believe your eyes sooner than my own. You know we agreed that seeing's believing. Now I've done with this wild-goose chase. What if that woman saw us, and is gone to rouse the Vicar!"

"Who's there?" shouted, in a stentorian voice, Mr. Trelawny from the window above—"Speak, or I fire!"

"Speak, or I fire!" shouted the Vicar again, in a voice of thunder. There was a rustling of the vine leaves, and a sound as of a heavy fall; but the night was so dark nothing could be seen.

For the third time Mr. Trelawny cried aloud, "Speak, or I fire!"—and then he did fire!

A sound between a stifled shriek and a groan, accompanied by a fall, followed the report of the Vicar's pistol.

Barbara, who stood on the landing outside Minna's door, partly to protect her mistress and partly to watch over the Vicar, hearing the report of the pistol and the stifled shriek, with her own secret suspicions that one of the burglars might be her husband, and that he might perhaps have been the victim of that shot, rushed screaming to the Vicar, saying—

“Master, come!—come down with me! We'll go down and look in the flower garden under Miss Minna's window!”

“Yes,” said the Vicar, “if I've shot one of the scoundrels I hope I haven't killed him, and if it's only a flesh wound we'll dress it for him, and make him confess.”

By this time Minna, Dorcas, and Sam, the page, appeared from different parts of the house.

The Vicar ordered Dorcas to stay with Minna, and Sam Devrill to come with him, and to bring a lantern.

It was some time before the lantern was

found, and all attempts at carrying a candle out of doors were vain, the wind was so high.

At length Sam appeared with the lantern, and the Vicar, Barbara, and the boy made their way round to the flower-bed under the window of Minna's little room.

Several branches of the vine were broken, and a rose-tree, which grew out of a grass bank beneath the window, was trodden down. Broken flower-pots, vine leaves, and loose earth lay around, and the light of the lantern fell on a pool of dark blood.

Barbara shuddered as she thought whose that blood might be.

"The scoundrels have got off," said the Vicar, following the track of the blood with the lantern across the flower garden to the little postern gate in the wall that divided it from the churchyard.

That gate was open.

"We can pursue the search no farther to-night," he said, fastening the gate. "Let us thank God we are safe."

CHAPTER XXI.

“ Which is the villain ? let me see his eyes.”

Shakespeare.

HE next day the Vicar was up before times, and before the news of the alarming and mysterious incident of the night before had got wind, he, in company with Sam, Barbara, and Robin, examined the premises and the churchyard.

Some drops of blood still wet on the grass led them to conclude that the “burglars,” as the Vicar called them, and as he believed them to be, had crossed the churchyard diagonally, reached the little postern gate, (which was still open,) and then got down to the sea.

There, of course, all further trace of them was lost.

Mr. Trelawny communicated at once both with the coastguard and the police.

He rode over to Sir George Manley, M.P., the nearest magistrate, and made his deposition.

Sir George, a long-headed man, who had been a barrister, did everything in his power to promote the discovery and apprehension of the “burglars.”

A large reward was offered to any who would even furnish a clue to their identity.

A larger still to any who gave information that should lead to their apprehension.

But it was all in vain.

No clue of any kind was ever obtained.

Barbara had her own terrible suspicions, which she of course kept to herself. Minna perhaps had hers, for her pallor, her weakness, and her nervous tremor at night, increased tenfold.

But Mr. Trelawny and the few inhabi-

tants of Pencombe believed it to have been simply a case of intended burglary.

It so happened that the very day before the appearance at Minna's window of the two men with black crape masks, Mr. Trelawny had had a tithe dinner.

The money which he then received he had not had time to place in the Bodmin Bank; it was in his desk in his study, and this was supposed to be the burglars' object.

Mr. Trelawny caused strong shutters to be affixed to all the windows, new and very good locks and bolts to all the doors, and an alarm bell to be suspended within reach of his own bed-head.

He cleaned, loaded, and arranged a small armoury of weapons on his mantelpiece, and, after teaching him how to use it, he entrusted a blunderbuss to Sam Devrill. He caused old Robin to sleep in the house with a loaded musket above his head.

By his request the police patrolled Pen-

combe perseveringly during the night; their measured tread and dark lanterns filling with a comfortable sense of security the breasts of the few inhabitants who had been rendered nervous by the attempted burglary at the Vicarage.

And thus by degrees tranquillity was restored, and the only permanent result of the attempted burglary might be traced in the trembling care with which old Dorcas looked to all the fastenings, the extra watchfulness of Barbara as she sat up in bed listening to every sound after she had left Minna to repose, and the occasional nervous terror which compelled the latter to call Barbara, or which sometimes made her leave her own bed, to come and lie down by her faithful attendant.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Oh ! let me now into a richer soil transplant thee safe,
And of my garden be the pride, the joy."

Thomson.

SOON after Minna's visit to the Castle Miss Osgood called at Natt Lynn's. She found Polly hard at work, and Rosy (a fine, blooming, strong girl) playing with a doll at the door.

Miss Osgood entered the cottage, and took the chair Polly offered her.

Miss Osgood glared at Polly through her green spectacles, and said—

"Why do you let that great strong girl of yours idle away her time playing with a doll? She ought to be helping you! It's a shame to see you slaving indoors, and

such a stout likely girl playing outside with a doll."

"She's but young yet, ma'am, tall and stout as she is," said Polly, "and I likes them to enjoy themselves in their youth. Sorrow comes soon enough, ma'am."

"Yes! and that's why they should be prepared for it. Train up a child in the way it should go, and when it is old it will not depart from it. You must want help with all those things to mend and your husband's and children's meals to get, and the place to clean and the children to mind!"

"I never want for help when Mary's at home, ma'am, and she've never been away before. She've got an old head on young shoulders, and a good will and an angel's temper, and has a helping hand, indeed, ma'am."

"But she's delicate, Mrs. Lynn," said Miss Osgood. "She's not fit to rough it. She works too hard, and doesn't live well

enough. She wont live to grow up at all if there is not a change."

"What change can I make, ma'am?" said Polly Lynn.

"Why, this," replied Miss Osgood. "Mary's a clever girl, who loves study. The Countess is willing to take her, at twenty pounds a year, to help in the school-room, and I'll undertake to educate her, so that she'll be a finishing governess in time, and when she's twenty she'll earn a hundred a year. Think of the help she'll be to you then, and bear in mind that she'll go into a decline if she has to work and rough it as she has done; why, her skin's as white as a snowdrop, and so clear one can see the blue and violet veins. I asked Dr. Dodd (when he came into the school-room) to see Lady Beatrice, who has a slight cold, what he thought of Mary Lynn, and he felt her pulse, and said, after looking at her for some time, 'Well, ma'am, there's no actual disease about her as yet; she's a very fine

girl, but she's a hot-house plant; if she had to rough it, she'd go into a decline.' ”

“ Oh dear! oh dear! ” said Polly, “ whatever shall I do without her? she's my right hand.”

“ But with the money she'll earn you can get some one to help you, if you can't or won't make that great healthy girl Rose of any use.”

“ Oh, no one can ever do what Mary does, or be the comfort she is. However, ma'am, she can stay at the Castle at any rate till the end of the week, and I'll talk it over with my master, ma'am, and let you know what he thinks about it.”

“ Very well; if he's got a head on his shoulders and a heart in his bosom, he won't stand in his own child's light. Mind you tell him what Dr. Dodd has said.”

“ I will, ma'am,” faltered Polly, as Miss Osgood strode away, saying as she did so to Rosy, “ For shame, you great, strong, good-for-nothing idle girl! Why don't you

go and help your mother? Give that ugly doll to your little sister, and go in and see if you can't be of some use, and not a hindrance and a burden and a cumberer of the ground. Get out of my sight; I'm ashamed of you! Who could ever believe that such a stupid, idle, unfeeling hussy is sister to such a good, clever, industrious, excellent girl as Mary Lynn."

Rosy listened aghast, with tears in her bright blue eyes; but when Miss Osgood's long bony back was turned, Rosy took a sight at her, and called out—but not loud enough to be heard—“ You Cure, you Cure, you perfect Cure! You spiteful old guy! I hates the very sight of you.”

But she left the doll on the bench, and went indoors and tried to help her mother a little. So Miss Osgood had done some good, after all.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“She neither moved nor spake, nor looked like those
Who claimed her, and with whom her lot was cast ;
Like some fair lily she above them rose,
Yet meekly loved and served them to the last.”

Lascelles.

HEN Natt Lynn came in, Polly told him all that had passed.

His opinion was, as she feared it would be, in favour of Mary's accepting the offer made by the Earl and Countess through Miss Osgood.

“ You see, Polly lass,” he said, “ what the Doctor says be true. Mary be a hot-house plant, and very like hard work and hard living, now she's growing so fast, might throw her into a decline.”

“ She never complains, Natt,” said Polly.

“No, and would not if she were ever so bad; but to tell thee the truth, I’ve often been troubled in my mind about her, feeling sure, as I does, that she’s born a lady, to think she hasn’t had the education of one. We don’t know what Providence may do yet. Her friends may turn up some day, and it would be a sad thing if she were to turn out a ladyship, and she with only the manners and learning of a fisherman’s daughter. So putting all things together, Polly, I think we oughtn’t to stand in Mary’s light. I shall miss her, I can tell you—no one more—for there ain’t much help or comfort in Rosy so far; but if Mary stays at the Castle, Rosy must turn over a new leaf, and it’s high time, for she’s getting as wild as a young colt, and more like a boy nor a lass.”

Polly yielded to Natt’s wise and Christian view of the subject, and agreed, with many tears and a very heavy heart, that, for the present at least, Mary should remain at the

Castle to help Miss Osgood in the school-room with the younger children, and to be taught music, French, and drawing herself.

But Polly stipulated that every Saturday was to be a holiday, to be spent by Mary at home, and that she was to remain with her family on Sunday, returning to the Castle early on Monday morning.

Mary loved her home—the little cottage in the rocks—and would have been content to dwell there, making herself useful and finding a pleasure in her every duty.

But she had a great wish to improve herself—a taste and even a genius for music and drawing, a passion for reading and learning, and all the innate elegance and refinement, which, though generally attributed to gentle birth, we sometimes find wanting in the loftiest and developed in the lowly.

She was soon quite at home in a castle—she who had been reared in so humble a cottage.

Very teachable and very plastic, she soon laid aside any little vulgarities or provincialisms of pronunciation or expression, and her extreme patience and sweetness of temper endeared her alike to the Earl and Countess and the members of their noble family, and to the domestics of the Castle. The Ladies Mildred and Julia took a girlish pride in dressing Mary in some of their own muslins and silks.

They insisted on having her long and lustrous black tresses dressed by their own accomplished French maid, Georgette.

They were much delighted when strangers mistook Mary Lynn for a high-born young lady, and curtsied low, and called her “your ladyship.”

As for the little girls, Ladies Beatrice and Florence, they doated on Mary, and to please her they learnt to read and spell, and to say by heart many of Watts’s hymns, and those beautiful poems by Mrs. Barbauld and Dr. Aikin which have

formed so many young minds and helped to make some poets.

But it was on Saturday that Mary shone most—at least, to our thinking. Directly she reached the cottage in the cliffs, and had embraced her mother, father, and the children, and partaken of some little feast got ready in her honour, her great object was to make up to Polly for the loss of her services during the week.

She would cover her fine muslin or silk dress with a large coarse apron with a bib to it, and, aided by Rosy, who was now ashamed to be idle, she would clean and dust and set everything to rights, and then she would take the children, and a large basket of stockings and clothes to be mended, and go and sit and work with such nimble fingers, in what was called “Mary’s seat,” in the rocks, with the little ones around her; and there “The veiled lady,” now herself again, and Paul

Penryn, would often come and join the little group.

When first Paul became acquainted with the tall, thin and lady-like person, dressed in such deep mourning, and never to be seen but in very remote places at early dawn or in the evening twilight, he felt so curious about her, that he took the first opportunity of asking Mary Lynn who she was. Mary only knew that she was said to be Mrs. Tibbs, a widow, niece to Mrs. Doreas, the Vicar's housekeeper. She had heard that she had been brought up by a lady to be her companion, but that she had married imprudently and gone abroad, where she had lost her husband and her child.

Mary loved and pitied her.

Minna would always bring with her—when she joined or met the children—a basket well filled with fruit from the Vicarage garden, and cakes and tarts of Doreas's making; and so every Saturday

and Sunday in fine weather there was quite a little festival going on in honour of Mary; and when it was cold or wet the same party, all but Minna, would spend the hours in Natt Lynn's cottage, happy as the day was long, and in winter much happier.

Rosy—like so many from whom little has been expected, suddenly raised to office and rendered responsible—displayed powers which had hitherto lain dormant; and the removal of Mary to the Upper House, *alias* the Castle, was the making of Rosy as an active, but by no means silent, member of that Lower House “The Cottage.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ Be strong, be good, be pure,
The right only shall endure.”

Longfellow.

TR. TRELAWNY, whose ideas of honour and of the sacredness and inviolability of a promise were so lofty and so strong, of course respected what he believed to be his daughter's vow, and endeavoured to be patient and to wait till the Earl's death should release her from her oath: when, if it indeed proved to be as he suspected, he determined to leave nothing undone to compel Jasper Ardennes to do justice to his victim.

This he felt would be the more difficult, because it had long been known that this bad man had married Miss Montresor, the

belle of Calcutta; that he had indeed wedded her as soon as the news of the wreck of the *Golden Bengal* reached India.

So that their eldest son was not two years younger than Mary Lynn; and they had had three pretty little girls in rapid succession.

One day that Mr. Trelawny was pondering on these things, pacing his study the while, and his cheeks burning and his eyes flashing as he thought of his daughter's wrongs and the day of retribution and redress which he felt must come, Barbara knocked at his door to tell him that the clerk wished to speak with him.

"I s'pose your Reverence have heard the sad news?" said old Trotter. "I'm come to ask your orders about tolling the bell?"

"For whom?" said the Vicar, turning pale and red by turns, as he thought it must be for the Earl!

"For Lord Derwent, sir. I've just seen

the butler; he was coming here, but stepped into the Chequers to have a glass; for, as he says, ‘Sorrow’s dry.’ But he told me he’d just had a telegram to say my Lord Derwent died at Altamount House this morning, and is to be buried in the family vault here. The body ’ll be down before the end o’ the week; and Master Jasper as wor, now Lord Derwent, he’d arrived from India, with his lady and family, in time to see the last of his brother, which it must have been a comfort to all parties, seeing they didn’t part the best of friends, and never wor what one may call brotherly together.”

“Toll the bell, of course,” said the Vicar.

“His lordship was forty-two, the butler said—forty-two the very day he died; so I shall toll the bell accordingly. I suppose Your Reverence will arrange with the butler about the funeral. My Lord Altamount will be down, of course, and so will Mr. Jasper—I mean my Lord Derwent!”

The old clerk bowed himself out.

Mr. Trelawny, sinking into his easy-chair, remained for some time plunged in thought. He walked to his window, through the leafy trellis-work of an arbour he saw Minna's black dress, and caught the fine profile of her fair face, and saw her delicate hands busy at some warm garments for the poor.

"If this bad man means to stay for any time at Pencombe," said the Vicar to himself, "I doubt whether Minna will be safe here. Poor down-trodden flower! blighted, repudiated, bereaved of her only child, obliged to pass as Dorcas's niece to save her life from an assassin's hand! I believe her to be at this moment Viscountess Derwent; and when that bell tolls for the father of him whose death it now proclaims with iron tongue, the whole world shall know the truth; and I hope I shall be spared to see yon poor humbled sufferer take her place as Countess of Altamount, in her robes and coronet, among the peeresses of

the realm; and thus shall even the shadow of a blot be wiped from the honour of the house of Trelawny."

At this moment the butler, *fresh* from the Chequers, arrived at the Vicarage, to communicate to Mr. Trelawny the Earl's wishes and directions with regard to the funeral of Lord Derwent.

The late Lord Derwent, in spite of all his promises of fifteen years before, had not done much in Parliament for "the ancient and loyal borough of Pencombe;" nor had he ever endeavoured "to maintain in all their integrity, the time-honoured institutions of this great country."

Place had been his object; and he had succeeded in getting into office.

His health, however, gave way when he was on the eve of promotion.

He was obliged to resign, and to live abroad during the latter years of his life.

He was not very much loved or very sincerely mourned at Pencombe; but in so

quiet and remote a place the solemn tolling of the church bell, and the news that the eldest son and heir of the Earl was dead, and was to be buried in the family vault, caused a good deal of excitement; and the Chequers was very full, and the character of the new Lord Derwent was very freely discussed.

Mr. Trelawny vainly tried to keep the exciting news from Minna.

She heard the bell toll—she counted the chimes which announced the years of the deceased.

She asked Sam Devrill (the gardener's boy) for whom the bell was tolling? And Sam, proud of having such important news to reveal, and not having been forewarned, told her all he knew.

As she listened, she grew whiter even than her wont.

“*He is a Viscount now?*” she murmured, as she stole into the shrubbery to hide her emotion; “and she, she will be called Lady

Derwent, and blaze and shine in courts; and I, I must hide and slink through life as Dorcas's niece—Mrs. Tibbs! How my father's honest pride is humbled! How often I see his cheek burn as he looks upon me! He thinks I have brought a blot—a secret blot—but not the less galling to him on that account—on his stainless, time-honoured name. But had Providence summoned the Earl instead of his son—and were those bells tolling seventy instead of forty-two—he should know the secret of my life! He should own that he has no reason to blush for his child! Oh, my lost little one! hadst thou but been spared to me, I might have gloried in wealth and rank for thy dear sake! Now, all I should wish would be the power of proving myself a wedded wife; and that done, I should be glad to die!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

“Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath;
Can Honour’s voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flatt’ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?”
Gray.



T was a very grand funeral.
The whole thing was managed
by B—, the great London under-
taker.

The master of the ceremonies of the King
of Terrors!

Always officiating when the Dance of
Death was going on in the mansions of the
great!

It was a marvel how so many magnifi-
cent black horses had been got together,
and how they had come down to Pencombe

without any one being aware of their arrival.

They had come by train till within a short distance of Pencombe—which they had reached during the night.

In Pencombe, on the day of the funeral every house had its shutters closed.

The bell tolled at intervals, from morning till night.

Everybody in the village attended the funeral; black scarves, hatbands, and gloves were lavishly bestowed wherever the London undertaker could find or imagine an excuse for supplying them—for all these things contributed largely to swell the funeral expenses.

Mr. Penryn and his son Paul, although since the election they had been very little noticed by the Earl, received from Lord Altamont, through Mr. B—, a formal invitation to the funeral, and hatbands, scarves, and gloves of the most expensive kind.

It was early spring when Lord Derwent's remains were borne in such pomp and state from the Castle to the family vault. And the young green of the trees contrasted beautifully with the towering plumes of black ostrich feathers shining in the spring sun, and waving in the fresh breeze.

From behind the curtain of her window (which looked on the churchyard) Minna beheld the funeral procession.

She saw the Earl looking haggard and old, in his deep mourning, his crape hat-band and scarf and long black cloak.

He officiated as chief mourner, and leant on the arm of one in whom Minna could scarcely recognise—her husband!

Fifteen years of course would naturally make a very great difference in the appearance of any man. To the eye of one who had not seen him in the interim, it would be more striking than to those who had watched the gradual change from early manhood to middle age.

But in addition to the natural effect of time, the climate of India, dissipation, intemperance and bad passions, had contributed to blot out all the beauty which had once had such a magic charm for poor Minna.

“How could I ever have loved him so madly?” said Minna to herself as she shrank from the window, utterly disenchanted.

She saw Paul and his father among the mourners, and fancied that the bright clear eyes of the handsome youth glanced up at the Vicarage windows from beneath his hat, surrounded as it was by a glossy silk hatband.

* * * *

The funeral was over, Lord Derwent lay in the family vault.

Again the black plumes glistened in the sun and waved in the breeze.

The Chequers was full to an overflow.

The mourners dispersed, and Mr. Tre-

lawnly, with a burning spot on each cheek and a smouldering fire in his eye, shut himself up in his study.

He was much excited. He had met the quailing eyes of the man who had blasted his daughter's life.

He had felt as if he could gladly have crushed him like a reptile beneath his foot, and he had been compelled to smother his just and natural indignation, and to bury the Dead with becoming solemnity, while the fiercest passions of his nature were busy at his heart.

Mr. Trelawny guessed, from the quailing expression of Jasper's evil eye, that he imagined the Vicar had guessed that it was with him his daughter had eloped.

Jasper had discovered that she had written to her father to announce that she intended to escape, and to embark in the *Golden Bengal*.

He had no doubt she had perished in the wreck of that vessel. He looked upon Dan

Devrill's attempt to cast a doubt upon her death as a trick to extort money, and he utterly disbelieved and despised it.

He felt certain that Minna's father was aware of her fate, and he hoped that as so many years had passed since she had met with a watery grave, he might be disposed to let bygones be bygones, to forgive and forget the past, and not to let the memory of a disobedient and undutiful daughter cause a lasting feud between him and one, who in the course of things must one day be Earl of Altamount, with a living in his gift worth ten times that of Pencombe.

Had not Lord Derwent comforted himself with this view of the matter, he would not at all have liked the idea of being in the same neighbourhood with such a man as Mr. Trelawny.

Sometimes he had thought of writing to Mr. Trelawny, of owning that in the fever and delirium of first love he *had* eloped

with Minna, but that he had made her his wife, and had only concealed their marriage from dread of his father's anger.— Now that he believed Minna to have been drowned, and to have been fifteen years at the bottom of the sea, he did not think there could be any danger in owning to Mr. Trelawny what might soothe his pride, mitigate his wrath, and make him at least a safe neighbour.

Even at the funeral; when he gazed at the tall powerful form, and the fine proud stern face of the Vicar, he felt much inclined, either by letter or in a personal interview, to prove to him that he had not dishonoured a daughter of the house of Trelawny, and to promise him when the Earl died, to have his first marriage recorded in all the Peerages.

He meant also to propose as a salvo to the Vicar's wounded pride, that a tablet should then be placed in Pencombe Church,

En ~~M~~emory of
M I N N A,
First wife of Jasper Ardennes,

IXth Earl of Altamount,
And only child of the Rev. Henry Trelawny, M.A., Vicar
of Pencombe, and Edith Minna his wife,
Who perished in the wreck of the “Golden Bengal,”
off the Cornish coast, on its way to Galway,
Ætat. 22.

Also of the infant daughter of the above
MINNA ARDENNES,
Who perished in the same wreck,
Ætat. one year and two weeks.

“I think,” said Jasper Lord Derwent, to himself, “that will both inflate and soothe the pride of the stiff-necked Vicar.

“I will also, as soon as I am Earl of Altamount, give a memorial window to Pencombe Church, in honour of my first wife, and in this window the arms of the Trelawnys shall be quartered with those of my house. It will not be for the first time either, as I will remind him—that will tickle his vanity. Poor Minna! I do owe her some atonement. She did idolize me, and was worth a thousand of the vain, selfish, thankless, domineering woman, recklessly

extravagant, heartless, and ill-tempered, whom I, blinded by passion, have made my wife and my tormentor, and to whom I sacrificed the most lovely and loving of her sex. She'll be furious at these tributes to her predecessor; but I shan't risk being knocked on the head or throttled by Trelawny, to please her."

It was in the afternoon of the day of the funeral that Mr. Trelawny went out on the beach to try to walk off the excitement of his pent-up feelings.

Old Dorcas was gone to the village shop. Barbara had been sent with some caudle and baby's clothes to a poor woman recently confined; and Sam, the foot-boy, had accompanied Dorcas to bring home her purchases. The old gardener was at the Chequers, talking over the funeral; and Minna was alone at the Vicarage.

The spring sun was shining, and his light tempted the lonely and dejected lady to pace up and down the avenue.

Suddenly she heard the bell of the back gate ring.

"I must not answer that ring," she said to herself. "It might be dangerous. I might be recognised even now."

Again and again the bell was rung, and still Minna, who had often been warned by her father, went not to the gate. Anxious, however, to see who it was, she drew her shawl over her head, and returning, she hurried upstairs into a loft which looked into the road on which the back gate opened.

She saw a man with a large basket of coarse earthenware, and with mats, brooms, and brushes for sale—a hawker or mugger.

"I may as well call out to the poor fellow that nothing is wanted here," she said to herself.

She was about to open the window, when the "mugger" raised his head, and again rang the bell.

Minnie then saw his face, on which the

sun shone, and in spite of his broken nose and the scar across his cheek, in spite, too, of the lapse of time since she had seen him last, and a hat drawn down over his brows, and a muffler drawn up to his nose; in spite, too, of a smockfrock, a sham hump, and a well-simulated lameness, she recognised the evil countenance and fierce, cruel eyes of Dan Devrill.

Nothing could be better contrived or more complete than Dan Devrill's disguise.

It would have deceived the practised eye of a London detective.

It was only owing to his pushing back his hat and muffler for a moment (when he felt sure that no eye was on him), that Minna recognised the, to her, terrible face of her husband's partner in crime.

From her post in the loft Minna watched Dan Devrill's movements.

She saw him adroitly and with wondrous speed apply a bit of wax to the key-hole of the back-door.

Since the alarm, Mr. Trelawny had caused some of Chubb's best locks to replace the rusty commonplace old ones which had hitherto been deemed a sufficient protection.

Wreckers were not uncommon on this wild coast, but housebreakers had never been heard of before at Pencombe.

Minna saw Dan Devrill carefully wrap up in his old red-and-yellow cotton pocket-handkerchief, and deposit in his basket, the model he had taken of the key-hole and lock of the back door. He then moved away with his wares, and from her commanding position Minna saw him cross the angle of the commonon, and ensconce himself in a sort of chalkpit, where, after drinking the contents of a black bottle of Dutch build, and eating some food he had with him, he composed himself to sleep with his basket by his side.

Just at this time Barbara returned.

Minna, who had the greatest possible confidence both in Barbara's fidelity and in

her presence of mind, at once revealed to her what had occurred.

Barbara turned red and pale by turns, trembled, and was silent for a few moments.

"Then," she said, "I'll be one too many for him yet, my dear mistress; for his own sake, as well as yours, I'll save him from the gallows. Come with me to the Vicar's room, and we'll get a telescope and other matters that will be useful."

Minna followed Barbara to her father's room. Barbara took a loaded pistol (a revolver), a small telescope, and one of a pile of the bills that had been printed offering a reward of 200*l.* for the apprehension of the burglars.

"Now, ma'am," said Barbara, "first I'm going back to the loft to discover by means of this telescope exactly what he's doing."

Having adjusted the telescope, Barbara cried, "Fast asleep as if he was as innocent as a babby, miss; a drunken sleep, no doubt, for the black bottle—'schiedam,' I know it

is, and smuggled, too—is empty beside him. His arm is thrown across the basket, and I can see the pocket-handkerchief and the butt-end of a pistol. But never fear; I know how sound Dan sleeps when that strong liquor's in his head. I'm off."

"Oh, don't go, Barbara," said Minna, pale and in tears. "He will kill you! Go in search of the police, and have him taken up by them."

"No, ma'am, no!" said Barbara, bravely. "I cannot do that. Bad as he is, he's my husband, and the father of my children. He was my first and only love, and my head has rested on his bosom, and I've sworn to love him and be true to him many a time. I know he well deserves hanging—none more so; but I, his wife, though I feel it is my duty to save my dear master and you from his villainy, I will risk my own life rather than let him meet the punishment he deserves. Don't fear for me, miss; I've ten times his pluck. You stay here and

watch through this telescope, and you'll see there'll be no bloodshed, even if he wakes, which I hope he wont."

"I will come with you," said Minna; "and then if he tries to kill you, I can give the alarm."

"No, ma'am, no ; the Vicar begged you'd not stir out to-day—so many drunken people are about after the funeral. You stay here. I shan't be long gone."

* * * *

Minna did not dare disobey her father. She remained alone in the loft, watching with trembling anxiety the movements of Barbara. Presently she saw the tall, thin form of the brave creature, dressed in black—Barbara always wore black—flitting among the furze bushes. She saw her enter the chalkpit, not a deep one, bend over the basket, withdraw the charge from the old horse-pistol, and put into her pocket Dan Devrill's store of ammunition. She then took the wax model from the pocket-hand-

kerchief. In doing so she moved the snoring Dan's arm. He growled, swore, and seemed about to wake and rise, but sleep over-powered him, and he snored again. Barbara then adroitly fastened the poster offering the 200*l.* reward, to a ledge of chalk exactly opposite the spot where he lay, and so that his eye must fall upon it directly he woke.

This done, Minna, to her inexpressible relief, saw Barbara scramble up the chalk-pit to hasten back. At this moment a wasp, tempted by the smell of the schiedam yet wet on Dan's lips, hovered near, brushing his nose with his wings ; the wretch growled, snored, and still half asleep, raised his hand to beat the wasp off.

The irritated wasp stung the full red sensual lip of the wrecker, who, maddened by the pain, woke, sate up, and beheld the, to him, dreadful poster, with the words, "Attempted Burglary at Pencoilbe Vicarage, and 200*l.* reward," in monster letters.

At the same moment his eye fell on the retreating form of Barbara, his wife.

"She knew me then," he said to himself, with a hideous oath. "She's gone to peach, to set the Peelers on me! She shan't live to do it." He seized his pistol. Had not Barbara so wisely withdrawn the charge she must have fallen dead on the ground; as it was, at the noise of the click of the weapon, she turned round. She was on a height.

He was in the chalkpit.

She took her loaded revolver from her breast, and cried, for he had risen to follow her, "Remain where you are, or I fire. I came to warn and save, not to destroy you. Leave this neighbourhood for ever and at once, or your doom is sealed. Even now I can see the police coming this way."

It was true the patrol was at hand.

Dan Devrill, livid with fear and rage, dashed the earthenware in his basket to pieces.

It had been of no use to him, and he was resolved it should be of none to anybody else. He tore down the poster, and thrust it in his bosom, with the pistol and the pocket-handkerchief, from which he discovered, with many a curse, that the wax model was gone. And then he scrambled up the side of the chalkpit, in the opposite direction to that which Barbara had taken, and away he rushed, like one pursued, across the common, and night found him still going on, on, on, he knew not, cared not whither, so that he got out of the neighbourhood of Pencombe, and the chance of detection and arrest.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“ Oh, how blest are ye whose toils are ended,
Who, through death, have unto God ascended,
Ye have arisen
From the cares which keep us still in prison.”

Longfellow.

POOR Mr. Penryn, left to himself by the death of his wife and of his aunt, spent his time principally in the education of Paul.

Being an Oxford man himself, and having taken high honours, he was admirably calculated to prepare so intelligent, dutiful, and docile a youth as Paul. A turbulent or a rebellious pupil he could not have managed.

They worked hard together, did the father and son, with the view of Paul’s competing for an open scholarship at Baliol College

as soon as he should have completed his seventeenth year.

Paul dearly loved his father.

He revered him for his fine scholarship and intellectual powers, even while he could not but secretly deplore the amiable weakness of his character, which showed itself in his credulity, his too ready compliance with the wishes of others, and the difficulty, nay impossibility it was to him to refuse anything asked of him,—in short, his reluctance to say No.

Paul, aware of this weakness, but of course respecting his father too much ever to allude to it, tried all he could to supply the place of that strong-minded noble-hearted wife, and that resolute and almost martial aunt, who had kept tempters from Mr. Penryn's path.

But Paul himself, with all his intelligence, his genius, and his moral courage was at this time a simple-minded, inexperienced country lad, much disposed to believe people

to be what they appeared, and that they thought, felt, and meant what they expressed.

Penryn Manor House was an interesting old place, and the home farm attached to it supplied the father and son with most of the necessaries of life; but both were left, by Paul's provident grandfather, who knew his son's weakness, so tied up and so entailed, that even if he had wished it, or needed it ever so much, he could not have raised sixpence on it.

Miss Priscilla Penryn, who had had a small fortune of her own, distrusting her nephew's weakness as much as his father had done, left her little all to him and to Paul after him, still more heavily fettered and tightly secured; at any attempt at forestalling it, it was to be forfeited to a public charity—namely, the Penzance “Idiot Asylum,” to which, in such a case, even in her will she prophesied her brother would ultimately be consigned.

It was now many years since Miss Priscilla and Mrs. Penryn, who thought discretion the better part of valour, had resolutely put Mr. Penryn out of the reach of Mr. Downy's specious arguments, and the great temptation he held out to him of trebling his niece's little fortune.

In the meantime Mr. Penryn had often seen Sligo Downy's name as the actuary of a very popular and flourishing life assurance —as on the committee of many promising speculations, and joint-stock banks; and latterly it had figured as connected with a project for converting into a fashionable watering-place—by means of a great Building Society, of which he was a governor—a small picturesque hamlet, called “Beech,” not more than a mile from Pencombe.

Owing to this speculation, Downy was at Pencombe at the time of Lord Derwent's burial.

As he and Mr. B—— were old friends,

he was of course invited to the funeral, and supplied with a hatband, scarf, and gloves.

After the funeral, Sligo Downy drew near to Mr. Penryn, who with his son Paul had withdrawn to a certain shady nook beneath a branching yew tree, where a marble slab revealed the entrance to the family vault of the Penryns of Penryn Manor. The names of those recently interred there were legible, but many of those of past centuries were some of them quite, and some partly effaced.

Paul and his father had planted violets round this slab, and they were now in bloom, and they embalmed the air.

They were gazing with moistened eyes on the name of Eva Maria Penryn, beloved wife of Paul Penryn, Esquire, ætat. 35—followed by that of Priscilla Nerissa Penryn, spinster, ætat. 84—when a shadow was thrown on those two names on which the sun was shining; and, turning round, Mr. Penryn and Paul beheld the stout form of

an elderly man standing, uncovered, behind them, holding his hat, decked with a rich silk hatband, in his hand, and a very large organ of benevolence literally shining on the top of his bald head.

Mr. Penryns, always absent, did not at first recognise Sligo Downy.

“Your servant, sir!” said Downy. “Forgive my intruding, but I had heard of your bereavements, sir! I wished to bow before the last resting-place of those two admirable ladies! Beautiful woman, the late Mrs. Penryns! and good as beautiful, and wise as good! And your aunt, sir! fine old lady! Allow me to bend my knee, and to drop a tear, sir!”

Mr. Penryns, who had a quick sense of the ludicrous, could hardly repress a smile.

Paul must have laughed, but that he remembered who was lying there; and then his young heart was full of tears.

“Ah, well, sir! we must all die!” resumed Sligo Downy. “They’ve the best

of it, sir! I'm glad to see you looking well, all things considered. I meant to have done myself the honour of calling upon you, sir. Are you going home? if so, my carriage is at hand, close by. Allow me to see you and this young gentleman to your own door!—Fine youth, sir!” he said (holding his hand to his lips so that Paul might not hear). “Mother's beauty, and father's intellect!—There's my carriage.”

He raised his stick, and the footman perceiving him, the carriage—a very smart new brougham, with a pair of glossy grey horses—drove up. Mr. Penrynn got in, because he was requested to do so, and could not say No.

Paul, who wanted to hurry down to the beach before dinner to learn from Rosy when Mary was expected, politely declined, and set off across the fields to the lane that led to the sands.

When Mr. Penrynn and Sligo Downy arrived at the Manor House, the former

thought he could not do less than ask the latter to walk in; and on Mr. Downy's remarking that he should scarcely get back to the Chequers before the fish he had ordered was boiled to rags, and the fowl dried to a cinder, Mr. Penrynn asked him to stay to dinner.

Mr. Downy did not touch on matters of business at first, but he did go so far as to say that he had seen Ann Penrynn lately, that she was grown a pretty but rather delicate girl, and that when the old lady, her aunt, dropt, and Ann had only her thousand pounds to look to, he couldn't think what would become of her !

“ Ah, my dear sir,” he added, “ that poor little thousand, the orphan’s pittance, would have trebled itself by this time if you’d sold out and invested it as I wished you to do some years ago ! Two thousand five hundred pounds in the name of Sir Simon Cribb, a friend of mine, also in the 3 per cents., have now—in the same concern I

recommended to you—have now become five thousand pounds. He knew I never make a mistake. That money was not his, he was only trustee for a sister's son. He's put four thousand into the 3 per cents. for his nephew's benefit, and one thousand he's kept for himself, and handed it over to me to treble for him, as he said, in the last, safest, and best of all my speculations, namely, the New Building Company for converting the hamlet of Beech into a fashionable watering-place ; a pier, public baths, a reading-room, an assembly-room, and a hundred villas, besides two large hotels, are now decided on."

At this moment, Paul, who never failed in punctuality, came into the drawing-room ready for dinner, and the next moment old Patience, the one servant of the family, announced that it was on the table.

Mr. Sligo Downy was full of anecdote and small-talk

He amused Mr. Penrynn and delighted

Paul, to whom all his stories and jokes were new.

He lingered on till a late hour, and then said he dreaded to go back to his bed at the Chequers, giving a ludicrous description of its discomforts.

Mr. Penryn, who had several spare rooms, at once offered him a bed, and Downy gladly accepted it.

Paul, who always rose very early to study, retired at ten o'clock, just as Mr. Penryn had ordered (urged to do so by sundry hints of Downy's) a kettle of boiling water, sugar and a lemon, and had gone down into the cellar to bring thence one of his few remaining bottles of fine old Cognac, and one of Jamaica rum.

An old china bowl and a silver ladle with a twisted whalebone handle, and a guinea at the bottom of the bowl, having caught the mild blue eye which Downy so often moistened with a tear, he proposed to Mr. Penryn to concoct a bowl of punch,

professing to have a receipt given to his father by the great Richard Brinsley Sheridan himself.

Mr. Penryn was very fond of punch, but had not tasted any for many years.

He could not say “no” to any proposition, and least of all to that.

Mr. Downy’s horses and carriage had been put up at Mr. Penryn’s, and Patience was driven almost wild by having to provide supper and beds for the coachman and footman.

Mr. Penryn, unaccustomed to drink punch, soon became a little fuddled.

Sligo Downy (a well-seasoned toper) pretended to be so, but was not the least affected by the beverage.

He now had it all his own way.

There was no strong-minded, true-hearted wife, no resolute, clear-sighted aunt, to rush in to the rescue.

Downy convinced him that he could easily enable him to treble Ann Penryn’s

little fortune, and clear a thousand pounds for himself, as Sir Simon Cribb had done.

Mr. Penryn had no command of money, and he wanted books for Paul, but he said he would not touch a penny, till, instead of the one thousand, sold out of the 3 per cents., he had invested three thousand for Ann's use!

Another glass, and then another, and "one bumper at parting," and then Mr. Downy proposed, that as his carriage, horses and servants were in attendance, they should start for London by the express, which left Pencombe station at 6.15, to do which they must be up and off at 5.45.

" You can be back again here in less than forty-eight hours," he said ; and then Mr. Penryn really very unsteady and staggering, and Sligo Downy pretending to be so, they retired.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"For he can smile and smile, and be a villain."

Shakespeare.

OWNY was up again at five.
He went to Mr. Penryn's door
and called him.

He had already roused his own servants up, and they were busy getting the carriage ready.

Mr. Penryn was sleepy and giddy, and felt very unwilling to rise, but Downy kept him up to the mark.

He even helped him to dress, and made him drink a glass of "early purl," which he had mixed in his own room, and which he said was a specific to keep off cold and headache.

Having taken this mixture, Mr. Penryn, who was beginning to have misgivings and to think of drawing back, was again in Downy's power.

The carriage drove up to the door.

"I must say good-bye to my boy," said Mr. Penryn, pushing open the door of Paul's room.

Paul was already hard at work, studying Sophocles by candle-light.

"Good-bye, Paul; I'm going to town on business," said his father.

"With Mr. Downy, father?" said Paul.

"Yes, my boy! I can't go in better company. Come and kiss me, Paul!"

Paul obeyed. He thought his father's manner very strange, and that he smelt of spirits and peppermint.

He had a faint recollection, too, of having heard his mother and his aunt speak of Downy as a dangerous man.

"Let me go with you, father," said Pau'.

"No, no, Paul; you stay and take care of the house and of old Patty. Good-bye, my dear boy!"

Paul attended his father to the carriage, and watched till it was out of sight; and then, rather disquieted, he returned to his books.

Downy carried his point, but not without a great deal of trouble.

Mr. Penryn had many misgivings.

It was the next day, after an early dinner, which he called luncheon, at Downy's chambers, that Mr. Penryn, having taken a good deal of fine old wine, Scotch ale, and a glass of grog, got into Downy's carriage and drove to the Bank.

Even at the last, before he could be induced actually to sell out the thousand pounds invested by him as trustee, Downy was obliged to give Mr. Penryn his note of hand for the money, payable at three months.

"The shares are going up so!" said

Downy; “the thousand will be doubled by that time. In fact, there wont be a share to be had. It’s a regular case of gobbling. But if you’ve got a ghost of a doubt or a shadow of a fear on your mind, I’ll give you my I O U, or my note of hand payable at three months—the note of hand of a man worth a hundred thousand pounds if he’s worth a penny. Come, you over-squeamish guardian and over-tremulous trustee, I think that clenches the matter! And by Jove we must be quick, for the 3 per cents. close in less than an hour!”

He took a stamped paper from his pocket, converted it into a promissory note for 1000*l.* at three months’ date, handed it, with a flourish and a tear, to Mr. Penryn, and then got him downstairs into the carriage and off to the Bank.

It was done—the trust-money was sold out, the 1000*l.* was in Sligo Downy’s hands, to be invested in his “newest, safest, and best speculation.”

Sligo Downy drove Mr. Penryn to the South-Western Station just in time.

“Poor little Ann Penryn! she’ll thank me and bless you for this day’s work some day,” said Sligo Downy, with a tear in his mild blue eye, as he waved his hat and displayed his organ of benevolence, looking brighter, whiter, and larger than ever.

Mr. Penryn slept almost all the way back, thanks to Sligo Downy’s early dinner and alcohol in many shapes.

Paul was at the station watching for his father.

It was then just twenty-four hours since Mr. Penryn had sold out the thousand pounds, Ann’s little fortune!

In the solitude and silence of Pencombe Manor House Mr. Penryn sometimes grew rather nervous about Ann Penryn’s trust money, but in a few days he received a letter from Downy, saying “the shares were going up every hour, and that he had already made the sum fifteen hundred.”

After this some time elapsed, and Mr. Penrynn heard no more.

Again he grew nervous and fidgety, but he comforted himself by taking out Downy's note of hand. "At the worst," he said to himself, "let the speculation succeed or not, let the shares be at a premium, par, or discount, here's the promissory note of a man worth a hundred thousand pounds!"

One morning Mr. Penrynn, who was not habitually an early riser, being deficient in that resolution which can conquer the temptation of an extra half hour in a warm bed, rose from a night of broken slumbers and painful dreams.

Having thought a good deal of his brother James during the day (as connected with his orphan girl's little fortune) he naturally dreamt of him at night.

He thought he saw him looking pale, reproachful, and even angry, and that he said "I trusted thee, brother; how hast thou repaid that trust? look at my child."

Mr. Penryn fancied that looking through the window of a room in which they had once lodged together (the first time they were taken to town) he saw a pale thin girl, barefooted and in rags, selling matches in the streets, and crying with cold and hunger, and that his brother James said to him, "That is thy work! oh, unjust steward."

This dream was so vivid that it haunted Mr. Penryn long after he was awake.

He hoped to shake it off by rising and taking a turn in the garden.

It was a lovely morning in May.

Nine o'clock was the breakfast hour at Penryn Manor, but the post came in at eight.

Old Patience always put the letters and papers on the breakfast table.

Mr. Penryn had latterly become intensely anxious for letters.

He went downstairs as soon as he was dressed.

Old Patience, or Patty, as Paul called her, was an excellent servant.

The breakfast table was spread in what had once been the great hall of the Manor House.

It was placed in a window recess.

Though Patty did everything herself, and was cook, housemaid, laundress, and waitress, everything was as nice (ay, and much nicer) than in many houses where there is a set of servants.

The sun came in through a quaint old gothic window of stained glass, on which were emblazoned the arms of the Penryns of Penryn, with their motto

“NEC TEMERE NEC TIMIDE.”

On the snow-white cloth, the china and the beautifully bright, old-fashioned silver, the sun shining through the stained glass, threw a bright mosaic of green, blue, crimson, purple, and gold.

Mr. Penryn's arm-chair was placed ready

for him, and on his plate lay the *Penzance Chronicle*, which came out every Saturday.

There were no letters.

Mr. Penryn sat down in his arm-chair, meaning to open the leaves of the paper with one of the knives, so sharp, bright, and worn, on the table, and then to take it with him into the garden to read it till breakfast time.

He had scarcely, however, glanced at the leading article, when a cry of horror and dismay escaped his blanched lips. The words “Sudden bursting of the Great Bubbles—The Pencombe Mining Company, and the Beech Villa Building Society. Sligo Downy, manager, absconded. His fraudulent bankruptcy debts, three hundred thousand pounds. Assets nil.”

A sudden dizziness prevented Mr. Penryn’s reading more than these dreadful words.

For a minute his heart ceased to beat.
The icy cold of death stole over his frame.

The paper fell from his nerveless hand,
and fluttered to the ground.

His eyes closed, and he leant back in his
chair insensible.

Mr. Penryn had fainted.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Fear naturally quickens the flight of guilt."

Dr. Samuel Johnson.

E left Dan Devrill, in his disguise as a hawker, and in his abject terror of the police and of detection and apprehension, hurrying along, unconscious of fatigue, bent only on getting out of Cornwall and into Devonshire, among whose giant rocks were hiding-places with which he was well acquainted.

He knew that the warrant, which had probably been issued for the arrest of the supposed burglars, would be available only in Cornwall, and therefore he associated with Devonshire a sense of comparative, though but temporary, security.

Who can tell what terrible consciousness of undetected crime made him shake as with an ague fit, at the thought of being taken?

He well knew that when the man of many crimes is taken and in the grip of the law, evil deeds of long past years often come to light, and Dan shuddered at the thought that the wretch arrested as a burglar might be tried for his vile life as a murderer.

He had just reached the point where, as he well knew, Cornwall adjoined Devonshire.

He recognised the spot, for a crime had been committed there some two years back, and no one knew better than Dan Devrill by whom the dastardly deed was done.

The victim was a gentleman who had, by strong, bold swimming, saved his life and his money and valuables from the wreck of the *Indiana*, and who, wandering to the outskirts of this wild village in search of food and shelter, had been overtaken and

savagely murdered by wreckers from the coast below.

Taking alarm at the sound of approaching steps and voices before they had disposed of the murdered gentleman's body, the wretches had taken to flight.

They had never been convicted, though a large reward was offered. Even now, two years after that dastardly and cruel murder, a large old poster was still affixed to the wall of an unfinished building; and as Dan Devrill emerged from a copse in which he had been hiding, and ascended the hill that led to the village of Leabrook, the moon came out from behind a cloud and shone full on the words "MURDER—WRECKERS—500*l.* REWARD."

This sum had been offered by the relatives of the murdered gentleman, whose identity had been established by the marks on his linen, and some papers which the wreckers had not had time to destroy.

He had been a good, noble hearted,

generous man, and when it became known to his wife and family that their beloved, whom the waves had spared, had been murdered by vile wreckers, the desire to bring the murderers to the gallows became the one great object of the victim's relatives.

"Confound that cussed poster," said Dan Devrill, with an oath, "who'd ever have thought that, after two years and more, that would be staring one in the face still? How well I remember hiding up behind that 'ere wall with Kit Koffin. Poor Kit, he's at Portland, rent free, leastways wor when last I heerd on him. Cuss that poster, says I!"

He picked up a large sharp stone, and flung it fiercely at the word "MURDER."

He flung the stone with such force that a bat, roused from his grim repose, flew out of the unfinished building, and several bricks fell inside the wall.

"Hollo! who's there? What are you after?" cried a voice from behind the wall, and through one of the apertures meant for

a window an evil countenance and a shaggy head was protruded.

“What, Kit Koffin, is that thee? who’d ever expected to see thee alive and out o’ limbo.”

“What, Dan Devrill, is that thee, mate? I’m right glad to see thee, I’ve work in hand that made me wish for just such a pal as thee!”

“I’m agreeable and ready, Kit,” said Dan; “but let’s get away from this cussed spot. There’s that confounded poster staring one in the face, and the lane round the corner ain’t the scene of my pleasantest recollections!”

“Well, I only took a bit o’ a rest here, but a mile on down on the beach my boat’s moored, so if you like, we’ll push on so far, and then we’ll make for the Jolly Tar, at S——. I’ve shot in the locker, mate, if you’ve none, and a good bed and a good supper, and a glass of good grog will give me strength to expound to you, and you to

hear and understand, how, if you're the bold chap you were two year ago, we may go snacks to the tune of five hundred pounds each."

"Come along, meate, I'm your man!" said Dan Devrill, as Kit Koffin, taking a flask from his pocket, handed it to his old companion in iniquity, who drained it to the dregs.

The two wreckers then hobbled away together, both weary and footsore, but animated by the prospect of renewing their old partnership, and refreshed by the prospect of sharing together the blood-stained fruits of some fresh crime.

"Whatever's that?" said Dan, as something flitted past him. "And Kit, look there!"

It was the bat returning to his "Night Refuge," whose funereal wings had struck Dan Devrill in the face.

The object to which he directed Kit Koffin's attention was the shadow of a

sign-post thrown by the moon on the wall, and which looming there black and huge, appeared to the terrified and conscience-stricken Dan what he most dreaded on earth—a gallows.

“Why, thee never ain’t a going to turn coward—thee as never feared man nor devil?”

“I’m that hungry and dry and dead-beat, that’s all, meate,” said Dan, apologetically.

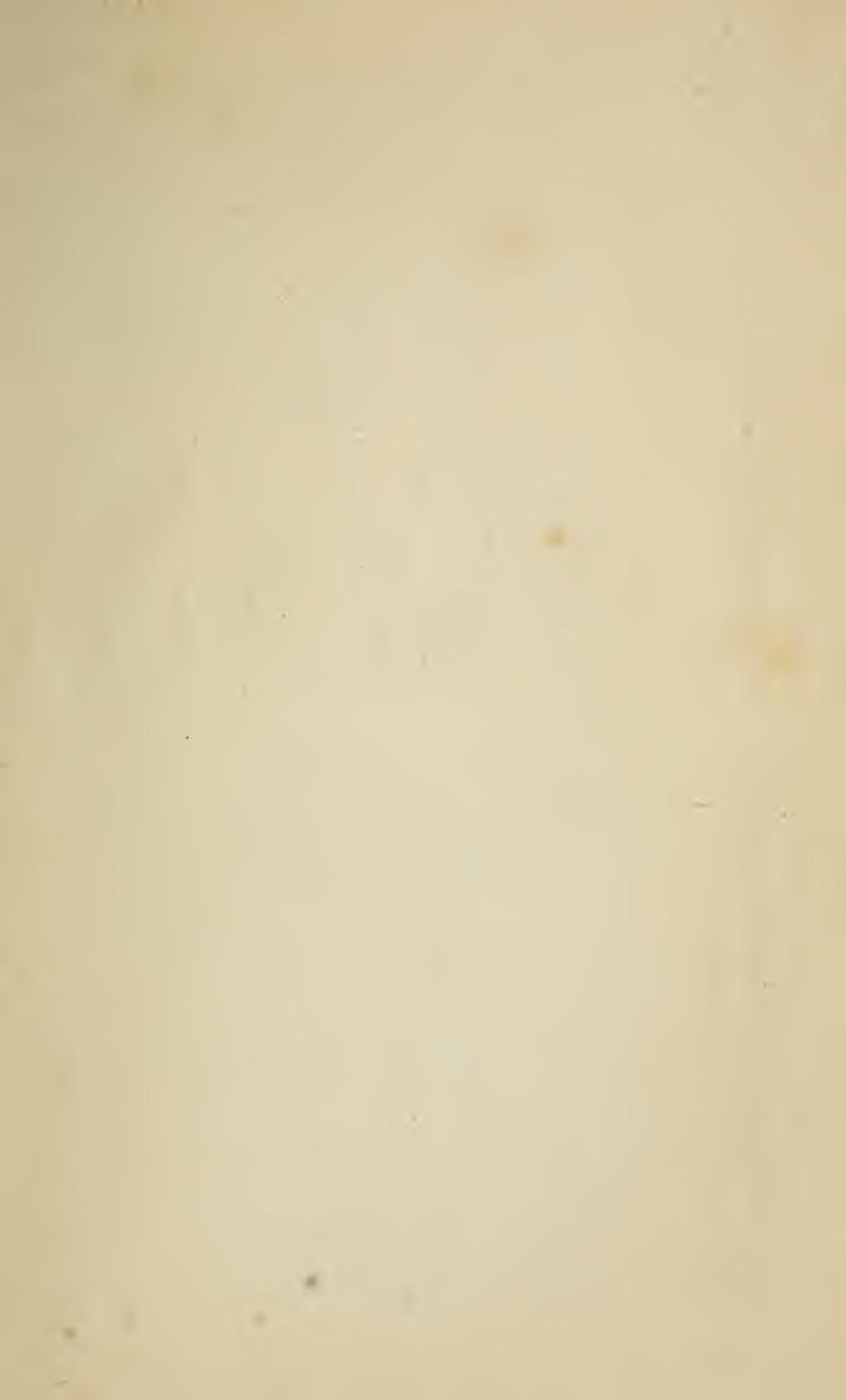
“Aye, thee be many a cup too low, so push on; I’ll row thee in a jiffy to the Jolly Tar. A glass of good grog will warm thy blood, meate. Hang it, we must all die, but at least let’s die game.”

The wretched Dan tried to follow Kit’s advice. But terror had taken full possession of the cowardly ruffian’s heart. He trembled in every limb, but he forced himself to hobble, footsore and weary as he was, after the bolder ruffian.

He could not bear to be left alone, and so near that hideous gibbet, too.

Luckily for Dan, Kit, whistling as he went on before, did not see that his wretched accomplice was livid and shaking, and that tears of utter misery were streaming down his ashy, hollow cheeks.

END OF VOL. I.



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